

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY AN ADVERTISEMENT

App Ref: PL/24/1707

Address: UNIT L30, ORACLE SHOPPING CENTRE, MINSTER STREET, READING, RG1 2AQ

Proposals: New fascia signage, menu board, projecting sign & window manifestation.

Case Officer: Mishga Marshall

Date received (valid from): 20/12/2024

Target Decision date: 27/02/2025

Agreed EOT Decision date: 28/03/2025

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a multi-storey building with the commercial areas at ground floor and basement levels only, within the Oracle situated adjacent of Minster Road. The unit was previously occupied by Lakeland, a chain of British kitchenware stores. The site is within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The surrounding area is commercial, no trees will be affected by the proposed development.

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Advertisement consent is sought for fascia signage, menu board, projecting sign & window manifestation. The adverts comprise:

'COSYCLUB' Fascia primary sign - Height 0.45m, width ~2.9m, depth 0.07m, height above ground 3.52m, height of letters 45cm projecting from the building by 7cm. The sign would have RAL 3003 'Ruby Red' powder coated individual lettering, internally illuminated, with illumination to be in soft warm white. Max illumination levels are proposed at 300Cd/m2 (secured by condition).

'ENTRANCE THIS WAY' Fascia secondary sign - Height 7.7cm, width ~1.51m, height above ground level 2.42m. The sign is proposed to have halo illuminated individual letters, with a mirror stainless steel finish.

'COSY' Projecting sign - Height and width 0.78m, depth ~0.07m, projecting from the elevation wall by 1m. The projecting sign would be an internally illuminated smoked mirror acrylic face with frame, with lettering and bracket in RAL 3003 'Ruby Red'.

Menu Board - Height 0.57m, width 0.7m, height above ground level 0.9m. the board would have a single long striplight along the top measuring ~0.6m, lacquered glass built-up lettering (20mm) finished in RAL 3003 'Ruby Red' would be below the striplight. The board is proposed to have a Chenille back, RAL 3003 'Ruby Red' frame and two finished in black legs affixed to the floor, with two pinned paper menus.

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- Air Quality Management Area
- Area of Archaeological Potential
- Area of Biodiversity Value
- Central Core

- Conservation Area
- Existing Active Frontage

SITE VISIT

Site visit date: 27/01/2025

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED RECIEVED [20/12/2024 & 23/01/2025]

- 0188.23 LOCATION AND BLOCK PLANS
- 0188.24 Ex Elevs
- 0188.20a ADV External Elevs

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/1719 - New entrance lobby and doors, external mirrors, redecorations and fascia - Pending Consideration

PL/24/1277 - The installation of a new door and infill panel - Approved

CONSULTATION

Site Notice Erected: 12/02/2025

No neighbour letters of representation received.

Internal Consultations:

RBC Transport: No Comment

RBC CCTV: This location is very close to one of our CCTV cameras so again can we make sure the illuminations are turn down considerably at night, as this is a very busy area later into the night and early morning due to the very late night venues in Gunn street.

RBC Conservation: No Objection

EQUALITY ACT 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

The following local and national planning policies and guidance are relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

OU4: Advertisements

OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

SPD Design Guide for Shopfronts Adopted January 2022

St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

Design Considerations

Policy OU4 states that advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable.

The site is within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The proposed new fascia signage and projecting sign is not considered to be obtrusive in terms of material and colour. Whilst of a more prominent colour scheme than previous Lakeland scheme, it would 'liven up' the Minster Street elevation in particular. The fascia signage would sit comfortably and would not appear disproportionate or incongruous. There is a mix of signage within the area, and it is not considered to be so out of keeping to significantly harm the character of the street scene or character and appearance of the Conservation Area. That said, internal illumination is generally not considered acceptable within a Conservation Area. However, the fascia lettering would not be excessive in size and would be individually affixed to the fascia which is appropriate. The projecting sign content would be fairly simple. After discussion with Team Leader, the illumination is not considered unacceptable in this specific instance. A condition is proposed to state that no part of the signs shall be illuminated other than individual lettering.

The Council's Conservation officer has raised no objection to the proposals, which are not considered to result in any adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area nor the setting of listed buildings along Gun Street and Listed church to the north west.

Given the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in design terms in accordance with Policies CC7, EN3 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Public Safety

Whilst visible, the fascia signage is not considered to cause obstruction or distraction to road/footway/cycle users. Transport Officers were consulted, but no comments received. However, a condition controlling luminance levels will be included for ongoing public safety. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in public safety terms in accordance with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Conclusion

The development has been assessed and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Advertisement Consent can be granted. The signage is not considered to have a detrimental impact on amenity, public safety or the historic environment.