

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application 25/0327/ADV

Address: Reading International Business Park, A33, Reading

Proposal: Proposed display of nine corporate advertisement signs

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Determination Date: 08 May 2025

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to the Reading International Business Park, located on the western side of the A33.



The lawful use of the entire site is Class E and formerly comprised a Class B1 office building with ancillary uses. Little Lea Farmhouse is a listed building located to the north west of the site.

The site is located in a Core Employment Area.

Proposal:

The application seeks advertisement consent for 9 signs comprising:

- 1 new unilluminated signage banners measuring 5125mm x 3101mm constructed using a PVC banner stretched on a polyester powder-coated aluminium frame fixed to existing facade.
- 7 new unilluminated signage banners measuring 6750mm x 4000mm constructed using a PVC banner stretched on a polyester powder-coated aluminium frame fixed to existing facade.

Replacement existing Verizon.

The signs would be mechanically fixed to the building and none of the signs would be illuminated.

Plans and Documents Considered:

Site Location Plan (drawing no. 1172_STP Rev P2)

Signage Plan (drawing no. 1172_SGP Rev P2);

Typical Signage Detail Sign Type PS2 (drawing no. 1172_SI-03 Rev P2)

Typical Signage Detail Sign Type PS1 (drawing no. 1172_SI-02 Rev P2)

Typical Signage Detail (drawing no. 1172_SI-01 Rev P2)

General Arrangement East Elevation (drawing no. 1172_GE_01 Rev P2)

General Arrangement South Elevation (drawing no. 1172_GE_00 Rev P2)

Design Statement

Covering Letter

Relevant Planning History:

231319/FUL - Construction of car port structures within the rear car park at Reading International Business Park with roof mounted photovoltaic panels. Permitted.

221152/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 10 (BREEAM) of application 201619. Discharged.

211821/NMA - Non-Material Amendment to planning permission 201619 to amend the wording of condition 13 relating to parking arrangements. Agreed.

211031/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 9 (Bus Stop) of application 201619. Discharged.

210480/ADV - 1 x Arrival Totem; 3 x Directional Wayfinding Totems; 1 x Campus Studio Totem; 1 x Arch Signage; 2 x Parking/Roundabout Block Totems and 1 x Lettings Board. Granted.

210860/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 5 (landscaping), 6 (AMS) and 7 (CEMP) of application 201619. Discharged.

210481/ADV - 1x Roof mounted sky sign. Granted

210400/APC - Discharge of conditions 4 (CMS) and 8 (Employment Skills and Training) of planning permission 201619. Conditions Discharged

201621/OUT - A decked car park to the rear of the site and associated amendments to the parking layout at grade. Withdrawn

201619/FUL & 201620/LBC - Upgrade of existing office building comprising the construction of a new entrance, reconfiguration of the car parking and basement level employee ancillary facilities (provision of new gym and end of journey facilities) and improvements to the hard and soft landscaping (including provision of meeting pods), consolidated waste management area, external alterations to 'The Dot' and internal works

to the Listed Little Lea Cottage and the recolouring of the existing terracotta tiles under Permitted Development Rights. Permitted

Consultation Responses:

Transport: No objection.

CCTV: No comments received.

Public Consultation

None required for an advertisement consent application.

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

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 apply.

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.

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is therefore also relevant to this application:

National

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Part 12: Achieving well designed places

National Planning Policy Guidance

Advertisements (2019)

Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

OU4: Advertisements

Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Amenity
- Public Safety

Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 141 states that *“The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed”*.

Further to this, the NPPG (Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306) provides clarification as to the exact context amenity should be considered (in short, it includes aural and visual amenity and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest). Furthermore, at the local level, Policies CC7 and OU4 require that development be compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding environment in order to maintain the visual amenities of the area. In particular, policy OU4 states:

“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 submission and plans indicate the number, size, siting, materials, colour and illumination of the proposed signs. However, the specific wording of the signs is not indicated. Paragraph 14 of the Advertisement Regulations states that advertisement consent may be granted *“for the use of a particular site for the display of advertisements in a specified manner, whether by reference to the number, siting, size or illumination of the advertisements, or the structures intended for such display, or the design or appearance of any such structure”*. Therefore, where use of the site for the display for advertisements is sought (as in this case) paragraph 14 does not require a detailed design of each sign, where the information relating to the ‘specific manner’ in which the adverts will be displayed is provided.

The number, size, siting and illumination (none proposed) detail has been provided. Indeed, further information in respect of materials and colours is also provided. It is considered that in terms of detail, this fulfils the requirement of Regulations 14.

The signs would be on the main building itself. Whilst the signage on the rear elevation spurs is somewhat cluttered, the building is set well back from the highway (to both front and rear) and the signs would be proportionate to the size of the building. Given it would be facing the M4/Basingstoke Road it is not considered to be so harmful to cause concern.

The signs would be similar to the existing 'Verizon' sign. The signs are considered to be of acceptable size and scale and the materials and colours are appropriate to the building and within the immediate commercial site context and the wider commercial area, the signs are not considered to have a visually harmful appearance. Furthermore, the proposed signs would be located a significant distance from the setting of nearby heritage assets (Little Lea Farmhouse) to the north west.

The signs would be flexible to allow for building tenants to display their corporate logos within the designated signage area. This is considered acceptable given the above, and within the context of the site and wider area, the proposed signage is not considered to result in any significant impact on the visual amenity and character of the area such to warrant a refusal.

The proposals are considered to comply with Policies CC7 and OU4.

Amenity/Transport/Public Safety

Whilst the proposed signs would be visible by road users, they would be located in positions such that they would not cause a physical obstruction to members of the public using the highway (either pedestrians or vehicular drivers/passengers). The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that there is no objection to the proposed signs and the proposals are not considered to result in any adverse harm to users of the highway or infringe public safety. Similarly, whilst the Council's CCTV team have not commented, given the position of the signs they are not considered to compromise any existing CCTV cameras in the area.

Given the above, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in public safety terms in accordance with TR3.

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 subject to conditions and informatives.