

Planning Statement – Advertisement Consent

Location – 2 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4RU

1. Proposal

This application seeks retrospective Advertisement Consent for the display of the existing internally illuminated fascia sign and projecting sign at 2 Duke Street, Reading. The application seeks to regularise the advertisements as currently displayed at the premises. As part of the overall shopfront scheme, a number of the existing ad hoc window advertisements and promotional vinyls are to be removed, resulting in a more coherent and less cluttered frontage.

2. Visual Amenity

The proposal represents a significant improvement to the appearance of the shopfront. The frontage had become cluttered through the accumulation of numerous ad hoc signs, promotional vinyls and advertisements of varying sizes and styles. The proposed signage rationalises these displays into a coordinated and coherent scheme that significantly reduces visual clutter and creates a more attractive and legible commercial frontage.

The fascia sign is contained entirely within the existing fascia board and respects the proportions of the host building. It does not obscure windows or cut across architectural features and remains appropriately scaled for the building. Likewise, the projecting sign occupies the traditional location for such advertisements and is proportionate to the streetscape.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The advertisements respect the host building in terms of their size, location, design, materials and colour, do not result in an unacceptable proliferation of advertisements and preserve the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

3. Conservation Area

The site lies within a Conservation Area. Policy EN3 seeks to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and gives positive weight to proposals that improve signage and remove inappropriate alterations or visual clutter.

The proposal is considered to positively contribute to these objectives. By replacing the previous assortment of disparate signage and promotional displays with a coordinated signage scheme, the development reduces visual clutter and provides a more orderly and sympathetic commercial frontage. The advertisements respect the traditional proportions of the shopfront and preserve the architectural hierarchy of the building by remaining confined to the fascia and projecting sign positions.

Rather than detracting from the character of the Conservation Area, the proposal enhances the appearance of the premises and contributes positively to the quality of the wider street scene, consistent with the objectives of Policy EN3.

4. Public Safety

The advertisements do not give rise to any concerns relating to glare or luminance. They do not obstruct visibility for highway users or interfere with pedestrian movement and are positioned wholly within the existing shopfront. The proposal therefore has no detrimental effect on public safety and complies with the requirements of Policy OU4.

5. Conclusion

The proposal represents a clear enhancement over the previous arrangement of signage. It removes a significant amount of ad hoc advertising and replaces it with a coordinated, well-designed and proportionate in keeping signage scheme that reduces visual clutter, improves the appearance of the shopfront and preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposal complies with Policies OU4 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and raises no issues in respect of visual amenity or public safety. Advertisement Consent is therefore respectfully requested.