

112 A Great Russell Street – 2023/0993/A



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Photo 1 - Application site (112 Great Russell Street) and wider streetscene



Photo 2 – proposed location of signage



Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date	19/05/2023
(Members Briefing)		n/a	Consultation Expiry Date	n/a
Case Officer			Application Number	
Tony Young			2023/0993/A	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
112 A Great Russell Street London WC1B 3NP			See draft decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal				
Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign.				
Recommendation	Grant Advertisement Consent			
Application Type	Advertisement Consent			

Consultation			
Consultation method	No statutory consultation is required for advertisement consent applications. Notwithstanding this, it is Council practice to allow a short period of time for our local residents and amenity groups to comment should they choose to do so. As such, the details of the application were made available online.		
Adjoining occupiers / local amenity groups, etc.	No. of responses	02	No. of objections
			02
Summary of responses	<p>Bloomsbury Association objected to the original proposal, summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal will have a significant impact on long distance views along Great Russell Street and detrimental to local heritage assets, local views from the adjacent conservation areas and settings of nearby listed buildings. 2. The proposal cannot be adequately considered without a proper assessment of context and the Council should not have registered the application without any visual impact assessment including photomontage images from key viewpoints and without accurate existing and proposed elevations. 3. The proposal is over-signed, so distracting or confusing that it creates a public hazard. 4. Light pollution impact on amenity of residential uses directly opposite at 5 Great Russell Street. 5. The proposed projecting sign conflicts with commemorative plaque, telecommunications equipment, security cameras and external lighting – all located in the same position. 6. Height of letters stated in the application form for signs is incorrect and neither capable of implementation nor enforcement. 7. Existing car park signage should be removed and street name plate reinstated in its original position. 8. The statement on ownership included in the application form appears to be incorrect. <p><u>Case officer response:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See section 3 'Visual amenity' below. 2. The Council is satisfied that adequate information has been providing in the application submission in order to both understand and assess the proposals. 3. See section 3 'Visual amenity' and 4 'Transport and public safety' below. 4. See section 3 'Visual amenity' below. 5. The original proposals have been amended and the projecting sign repositioned so as not to impact on any existing equipment or plaque (see also section 1 'Proposal' below). 6. The application has been assessed based on the amended proposals and dimensions as shown on the revised drawings. Any approval would include a standard condition requiring that the proposal is implemented in accordance with the approved drawings. 7. The removal of existing signage on other sections of the building does not form part of the application proposals. 8. Any approval would include a standard condition requiring that no advertisement is displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant 		

permission.

David Cooper & Co. objected on behalf of the owner, summarised as follows:

1. The applicant is not the owner of the land where the signage is proposed to be displayed.

Case officer response:

1. Any approval would include a standard condition requiring that no advertisement is displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

Site Description

The site is occupied by a large detached 20th Century brutalist building bounded by Great Russell Street to the south, Adeline Place to the east, Bedford Avenue to the north and Tottenham Court Road to the west. It is located within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), and as such the surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses including commercial, residential, cultural and leisure uses.

On the upper floors of the building is the existing St. Giles Hotel which is accessed from Bedford Avenue. The YMCA is accessed by an entrance on Great Russell Street adjacent to the pedestrian entrance to the former underground car park and extends into the upper basement levels. The ground floor of the building is primarily comprised of retail, food and drink uses.

The existing building is not listed and the application site is not located in a conservation area, although the Bloomsbury Conservation Area borders the site to the north, east and south along Bedford Avenue, Adeline Place and Great Russell Street respectively. The boundary with the Hanway Conservation Area sits further to the west across Tottenham Court Road.

Relevant History

2015/5699/A (no. 112A) - Installation of 1 x LED sign (internal), 4 x internally illuminated poster display boards at ground floor level (all internal) and 1 x internally illuminated replacement car park sign at first floor level (external). Advertisement consent granted 07/01/2016

2008/5948/A (Adeline Place Car Park YMCA, no. 112) - Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign and internally illuminated projecting sign at the entrance to the underground car park on Adeline Place. Advertisement consent granted 16/03/2009

AS9905050 (no. 112) - The display of a projecting back lit illuminated sign above the main entrance. Advertisement consent granted 21/12/1999

AD716 (London Central YMCA, no. 112) - Display of a non-illuminated letting board measuring 8 ft by 6 ft sited at first floor level approximately 24 ft above the pavement at the south west corner of the building. Permission granted 10/11/1977

AD639 (London Central YMCA, no. 112) - The display of a non-illuminated directional parking sign measuring 0.76m x 0.5m (height). The sign to be affixed on the Great Russell Street frontage above a ground floor window. Permission granted 28/09/1977

AD313R (London Central YMCA, no. 112) - The display of internally illuminated fascia letters measuring 0.17m (7") in height. Permission granted 25/08/1976

Neighbouring site:

2017/3559/A (no. 111A) - Display of two internally illuminated signs to wall and two internally illuminated projecting signs. Advertisement consent granted 31/08/2017

2015/4503/A (no. 111) - Display of externally illuminated banner sign at 1st floor level. Advertisement consent refused 26/01/2015 on grounds that the externally illuminated advertisement, by reason of its prominent location at first floor level would result in an incongruous addition which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building and the streetscene,

2014/7963/A (no. 111A) - Display of non-illuminated projecting sign, and replaced awning and internally illuminated menu box. Advertisement consent granted 26/01/2015

2013/6380/A (no. 111A) - The display of 1 x awning sign, 2 x internally illuminated menu board, 1 x internally illuminated window sculpture, 2 x internally illuminated signs to the front and side elevation. Advertisement consent granted 13/11/2013

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The London Plan 2021

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 - Managing the impact of development

D1 - Design

D4 - Advertisements

T1 - Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

CPG Advertisements (March 2018) – paragraphs 1.1 to 1.11; and 1.13 to 1.18

CPG Design (January 2021) - chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Design excellence), 3 (Heritage) and 6 (Shopfronts)

CPG Transport (January 2021) – chapters 7 (Vehicular access and crossovers) and 9 (Pedestrian and cycle movement)

CPG Amenity (January 2021) – chapters 1 (Introduction) and 4 (Artificial light)

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1 The proposal is seeking advertisement consent for the display of signage in connection with a development comprising a 187-room hotel at basement levels -4 and -5. The intention of the proposed signage which is the subject of this application is to direct hotel guests to a ground floor entrance on Great Russell Street.

1.2 For this purpose, the following signage was originally proposed (see Images 1 and 2 below):

- 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign (measuring 0.9m high x 4.4m wide); and
- 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign (measuring 3m high x 0.8m wide)

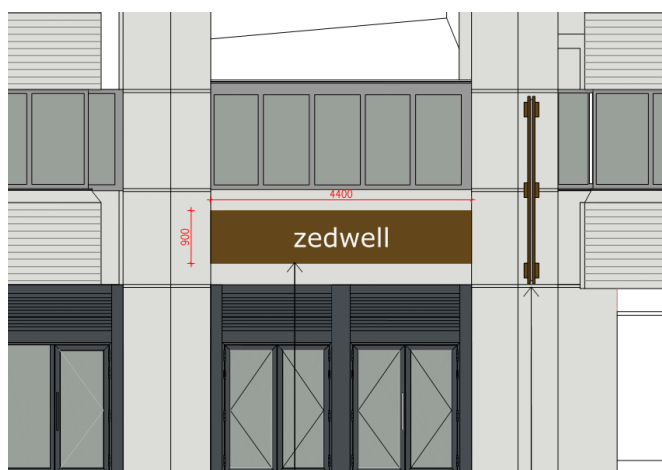


Image 1 – original proposed front elevation drawing



Image 2 – originally proposed projecting sign

Revisions 1

1.3 The Bloomsbury Association raised a number of concerns, one of which being in regard to the possible harmful impact arising from the close proximity, positioning and size of a proposed projecting sign on an existing commemorative plaque, telecommunications equipment, security cameras and external lighting.

1.4 In response, the applicant acknowledged the concern and provided revised drawings showing the sign relocated to the opposite (left-hand) side of the entrance in order to address this

issue.

Revisions 2

- 1.5 The Council initially raised concern in regard to original proposals to display the proposed projecting sign in Great Russell Street, in so far as it would be excessively large and inappropriately positioned above fascia level, appearing as an incongruous and oversized projection. Additionally, it appeared from the submitted drawings that the edges of the sign would also be illuminated and so might have a further unnecessary and harmful visual impact in the streetscene.
- 1.6 Following the concerns raised, the applicant provided revised drawings showing the relocated projecting sign to be significantly reduced in size (from 3m high x 0.8m wide as originally proposed to 0.7m high x 0.7m wide as revised) and relocated from 1st floor level to a lower proposed position at a fascia level. The applicant also confirmed that the edges of the sign would not be illuminated.
- 1.7 The revised signage proposal, therefore, is the subject of this current application and assessment, as follows (see Images 3 and 4 below):

- 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign (measuring 0.9m high x 4.4m wide); and
- 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign (measuring 0.7m high x 0.7m wide)

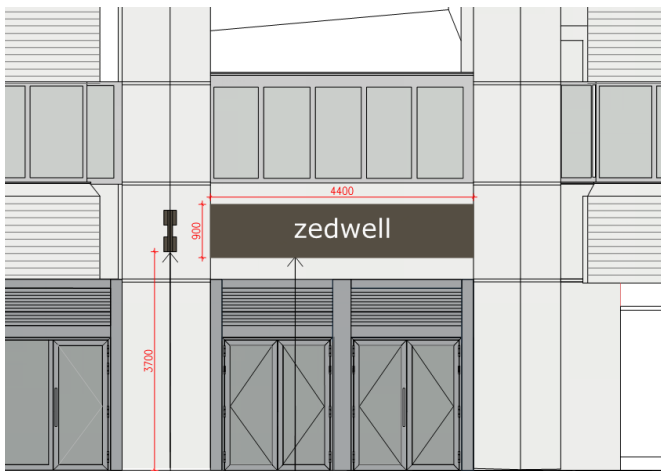


Image 3 – revised proposed front elevation drawing

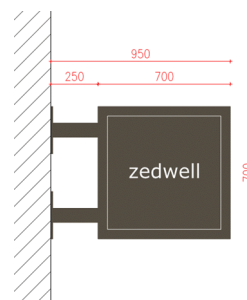


Image 4 – revised proposed projecting sign

2. Assessment

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 permits the Council to only consider amenity and public safety matters in determining advertisement consent applications.
- 2.2 The principal considerations therefore material to the determination of this application are:
- a) visual amenity – the design and impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building, wider streetscene, the adjacent Bloomsbury Conservation Area and settings of any nearby listed buildings; and on neighbouring amenity (in so far as the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 allow consideration in this regard); and
 - b) transport and public safety – the impact of the proposal on highway, pedestrian and cyclist's safety.

3. Visual amenity

- 3.1 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) establishes that careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness and the wider context is needed in order to achieve high quality development in Camden which integrates into its surroundings.

- 3.2 Local Plan Policy D4 (Advertisements) confirms that the Council will resist advertisements that in particular contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area, contribute to street clutter in the public realm, cause light pollution to nearby residential properties, impact upon public safety or are displayed above fascia level or ground floor level.
- 3.3 Policy D4 also states that any advertisements on or near a listed building or conservation area must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings.
- 3.4 CPG (Advertisements) states that '*The type and appearance of illuminated signs should be sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located*'. The guidance further states that, '*All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings*' (paragraphs 1.14 and 1.8 respectively).
- 3.5 The revised proposal would involve the display of suitably sized and located signage, particularly following a significant reduction in size of the projecting sign from that originally proposed and its relocation to a more appropriate lower position at fascia level (see Images 1-4 above). The proposed signage would not obscure or damage any architectural features on the host building and its repositioning ensures that there is no adverse impact on any other existing equipment or paraphernalia fixed to the front elevation, such as, a commemorative plaque, telecommunications equipment, security cameras and external lighting.
- 3.6 Though internally illuminated signs are generally discouraged in some cases in preference of non-illuminated or externally illuminated signage, in this particular instance, the use of gentle internal illumination is noted with relatively low luminance levels (no higher than 350 cd/m²), which along with the illumination of lower-case lettering only and a calm colour palette, would serve to minimise the impact of the proposed signage on the host building and streetscene.
- 3.7 Additionally, it is noted that advertisement consent (2017/3559/A) was granted in 2017 at the adjacent ground floor unit (no. 111A) for the display of 2 x internally illuminated signs and 2 x internally illuminated projecting signs.
- 3.8 While it is accepted that all advertisements are intended to attract attention and are commonplace in various forms in commercial streets such as this, given the size, location and low luminance level of the signs, the proposal would not appear prominently within the streetscene, either in local or longer views along Great Russell Street. Additionally, their display would not be detrimental to any views from the adjacent conservation area or settings of any nearby listed buildings.
- 3.9 Overall, therefore, the revised proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of their size, design, locations, methods of illumination and luminance levels, and would preserve the character and appearance of the host building, streetscene and adjacent conservation area, and would not be harmful to the special architectural or historic interest of any nearby listing buildings or their settings.
- 3.10 As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with policies A1, D1 and D4 of the Camden Local Plan 2017, as well as, all other relevant policies and guidance in this regard.

Residential amenity

- 3.11 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and by only granting permission or consent for development or alterations that would not harm the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbouring residents.
- 3.12 The proposal would not cause any harm to neighbouring residential amenities in terms of light pollution or outlook, particularly given the relatively low luminance levels (a maximum of 350 cd/m²) and other characteristics of the proposed signage which are typical of appropriate advertising in this busy Central London location.

4. Transport and public safety

- 4.1 Policy D4 of the Local Plan states that advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact adversely upon public safety, including where they distract road users because of their unusual nature. CPG (Transport) also seeks to ensure that there isn't an adverse impact on the highway network, the public footway and crossover points.
- 4.2 The proposed signage is not considered to be harmful to either pedestrian or vehicular traffic and would unlikely introduce any undue distraction or hazard in public safety terms. The proposals therefore raise no public safety concerns.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is therefore recommended that advertisement consent be granted.

The decision to refer an application to Planning Committee lies with the Director of Regeneration and Planning. Following the Members Briefing panel on Monday 5th June 2023, nominated members will advise whether they consider this application should be reported to the Planning Committee. For further information, please go to www.camden.gov.uk and search for 'Members Briefing'.

Application ref: 2023/0993/A
Contact: Duty Determination Team
Tel: 020 7974 4444
Email:
Date: 25 May 2023

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DRAFT

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Advertisement Consent Granted

Address:
112 A Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3NP

DECISION

Proposal:

Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign.

Drawing Nos: 2897/L/01; GRS-0171 rev P1; (CCL-B1-01-DR-A-)3100 rev P2, 3101 rev P2, 3102 rev P2, 010 rev P2; Cover Letters from Centro Planning Consultancy dated 08/03/2023 and 18/04/2023.

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant consent subject to the following condition(s):

Conditions and Reasons:

- 1 No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

Reason: - As required by regulation 2(1) and Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

- 2 No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to
- (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle

Reason: - As required by regulation 2(1) and Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

- 3 Any advertisement displayed and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: - As required by regulation 2(1) and Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

- 4 Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.

Reason: - As required by regulation 2(1) and Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

- 5 Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: - As required by regulation 2(1) and Schedule 2 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

You can find advice in regard to your rights of appeal at:

<https://www.gov.uk/appeal-householder-planning-decision>.

If you submit an appeal against this decision you are now eligible to use the new [submission form](#) (Before you start - Appeal a planning decision - GOV.UK).

Yours faithfully

Chief Planning Officer

DRAFT

DECISION