

Our ref: PW/NS/SM/JCG26638

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Date: 11 January 2024

Camden Council
Planning - Development Control
London Borough of Camden 2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
C/O Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

For the Attention of: Daren Zuk

Dear Sir / Madam,

**APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT AT FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE, 1 MIDLAND ROAD,
LONDON, NW1 1AT.
PLANNING PORTAL REF. PP-12716111**

On behalf of our client, Francis Crick Institute Ltd, we submit an application for temporary advertisement consent in relation to Francis Crick Institute, 1 Midland Road, London NW1 1AT. The submission relates to the display of advertisements along Midland Road and comprises;

“Display of 2x wall mounted vinyl; 1x vinyl installed on balustrade; 1x vinyl wrapped on lamp post; 1x vinyl displayed on windows and 1x vinyl fixed on column along the entrance.”

Site Context and Background

The Francis Crick Institute is a biomedical research centre in Camden. It is bound by Ossulston Street to the west, Brill Place to the north, Midland Road to the east and the British Library/Dangoor Walk to the south.

The site benefits from excellent public transport links and has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6b. St. Pancras International is approximately 50m to the east, King's Cross Station approximately 200m beyond and Euston Station is approximately 300m away to the west along Euston Road.

Francis Crick Institute will be launching a free exhibition called "Hello Brain!" in March 2024, which reflects the notion of editing and change. The proposed signage is therefore intended to be in place ahead of the exhibition which will start in February 2024 and end on 31 July 2025.

The proposals under this application are similar to the signage, which was approved under permission ref. 2022/5352/A. In addition, these proposals include the extension of the vinyls wrapped on the lampposts under consent ref. 2022/1364/A. As such, the principle for what is now being proposed has already been established.

Relevant Planning History

Advertisement consent similar to that forming this submission has previously been granted (and one withdrawn) on a number of occasions. These are summarised as follows:

- **2018/0004/A** – *“Display of 4 x non-illuminated banners signs onto existing columns at ground floor level on front elevation, and 1 x non-illuminated post mounted 4-sided aluminium totem sign located in front of the main entrance on Midland Road”*. **Granted 26.01.2018.**

- **2021/2746/A** – “Temporary display of 3 x non-illuminated vinyl banner signs to the front elevation and 6 x colour vinyl wrapped lamp posts on the forecourt, to be displayed from 1st August 2021 until 13th August 2022.” **Granted 30.07.2021.**
- **2021/3526/A** – “Temporary display of 2x vinyls to the southern side elevation and 12 x non-illuminated panels fixed to the fence on Dangoor Walk for a period of display from 25 October 2021 until 10 November 2023.” **Granted 13.08.2021.**
- **2021/3531/A** – “Temporary display of 12 painted signs to the road surface forming the word ‘Discovery’ to be displayed during the public exhibition from 25 August 2021 until 10 November 2023.” **Granted 13.08.2021.**
- **2022/1364/A** – “Temporary display of 4 non-illuminated wall mounted boards, 6 colour-wrapped columns on the south elevation, and 10 non-illuminated panels fixed to the fence on Dangoor Walk, to be displayed during the public exhibition until 30 November 2023.” **Granted 03.05.2022.**
- **2022/1444/NEW** – “The Temporary display of 4 x wall mounted vinyl boards (one ‘title board’ and a smaller ‘explanation’ board to the exhibition), 6 x vinyl wrapped columns along the southern elevation of the building plus 12 x non-illuminated fixed fence panels.” **Withdrawn.**
- **2022/5352/A** – “Temporary display of 1x vinyl text to the front elevation; 1x vinyl strip to the balustrade; 6x vinyl to the windows to the front elevation; 11x vinyl to the entrance floor surface and 6x vinyl wraps to lamp posts on the forecourt to be displayed from 11 February 2023 until 02 December 2023.” **Granted 27.01.2023.**

The case officer involved in the most recent applications was Leela Muthoora.

Proposed Signage

The proposed signage comprises the installation of the following:

- 2 x printed vinyl displayed on the walls (indicated as “Area 1: Wall 1” and “Area 5: Wall 2” on Signage document). For “Area 1: Wall 1” this will include text regarding the title of the exhibition “Hello Brain!”. The width of the “Area 1: Wall 1” vinyl will be 10,000mm and the height will be 5,100mm and the vinyl will be 1,630mm from ground level. For “Area 5: Wall 2” part 1 will include a larger text reading the title of the exhibition “Hello Brain!”, with a smaller slogan reading “You shape my world, your world shapes me.”. The width of this vinyl will be 3,500mm and the height will be 9,500mm and the vinyl will be 8900mm from ground level. For “Area 5: Wall 2” part 2 this will include an arrow with smaller text contained within it reading “Free Exhibition”. The width of this vinyl will be 3,450mm and the height will be 3,750mm and the vinyl will be 1700mm from ground level.
- 1x printed vinyl displayed on balustrade (indicated as “Area 2: Balustrade” on Signage document). This will include a long strip of vinyl with various text and artwork. The width will be 30,480mm, the height will be 1,052mm and the depth less than 1mm thickness. The vinyl will be 1,690-1,940mm from ground level.
- 1x coloured vinyl displayed on a lamp post (indicated as “Area 3: Lampposts” on Signage document).
- 1x vinyl applied to the windows which includes 3x various artwork/shapes applied to the windows (indicated as “Area 4: Windows” on Signage document). The width of the vinyl will be 4,250mm, the height will be 3,600mm and the depth less than 1mm thickness.
- 1x vinyl applied to the column (indicated as “Area 4: Column” on Signage document). The width of the vinyl will be 2,720mm, the height will be 3,000mm and the depth less than 1mm thickness.

As highlighted above, it should be noted that the vinyls wrapped on the lampposts have consent under ref. 2022/1364/A. This application seeks to reduce the number of wrapped lampposts to 1. These have been included within the application to extend the permission of these features for the lamppost.

For further details on the proposed signage (including dimensions and visuals), please refer to the Signage document, titled ‘The Francis Crick Institute Forecourt Vinyl Installation’ (issue: 01, date: 05.01.24).

Planning Policy Context and Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan is comprised of the following documents:

- The London Plan (2021); and
- Camden Local Plan (2017).

Policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan requires advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their host building and respective setting through respecting the form, fabric, design and scale. The policy sets out that the Council will support advertisement which preserves the character and amenity of an area and preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas. Furthermore, the policy states the Council will resist advertisements which 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 or wildlife habitats, have flashing illuminated elements or impact upon public safety.

National Policy

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) requires the Local Planning Authority to consider two main issues with regard to advertisements, namely the following:

- Impact on amenity;
- Impact on public safety.

At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance are material planning considerations in the decision-making process.

The NPPF states at paragraph 141 that control of advertisements should be operated in a way which is *"simple, efficient and effective"*. It reiterates the two main considerations outlined within The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended), stating:

*"The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. **Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.**"* (our emphasis).

Supplementary Planning Documents

The Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) on Adverts states that in general, the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account the character and design of the property, the appearance of its surroundings and the external fabric of the host building.

Planning Assessment

Design Considerations

No illuminated signage is proposed and the proposals will not provide a street clutter appearance on Midland Road. It is considered that the signage will make a positive and vibrant contribution to the street-scene and respects the site and the immediate surrounding context.

Impact on Visual Amenity

In making an assessment as to its suitability, it is necessary to consider the visual impact of the proposed signage in the context of the immediate surrounding area, where nearby occupiers or passers-by will be aware of the advertisements.

The site has been subject to a number of advertisements consent associated with previous exhibitions. The proposal will maintain the same level of signage proposed as those which were previously approved, which means that the impact on the visual amenity will virtually remain the same.

The proposal will maintain a balance between the vinyls and the original facade of the host building, to ensure it does not result in a cluttered effect and therefore will not impact the visual amenity of the street scene. It is therefore considered that the impact on the amenity as a result of the proposed signage is acceptable. It is in fact considered that the proposal will contribute to enhancing and supporting the function of the Crick Institute.

Impact on Public Safety

There are no projecting signs or illuminated signs proposed and as such the proposals would have no effect on public safety as these will be installed by professionals and are positioned such that they will not cause obstruction.

Scope of Submission

The documents submitted with the planning application include the following:

- Completed Application Form;
- This Planning Covering Letter;
- The Francis Crick Institute Forecourt Vinyl Installation Planning Document (issue: 01; date: 05.01.24). The original size of this document is A3 and includes the site location plan at a scale of 1:1250 and existing and proposed elevational drawings at a scale of 1:100;
- Site Location Plan (ref. 17106-A-1001 rev. P01);
- The Planning Application Fee of **£578** (+ £64 service charge) has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Conclusion

The Francis Crick Institute is considered to be both a landmark and unique building under the terms of the CPG within the Borough and the banners will assist in promoting the multiple public benefits that the institute offers which visitors and other members of the public may not be aware of.

The purpose of the installation is to raise publicity and awareness to the public of the Crick's free exhibition "Hello Brain!". The proposed vinyls would only be displayed for around 17 months, being installed during the week commencing 12 February until the end of the exhibition scheduled for the 31 July 2025. However, it is likely that the vinyls will remain on the building for a couple of weeks after the event ends, and so we are looking at the 30 August 2025 as the date by which removal should occur. As such they are designed to be installed and removed without damaging the building and boundary fence.

One of the Crick's strategic priorities is to engage and inspire the public. Public exhibitions help the Crick to fulfil its community and public engagement commitments which are set out in the Community Engagement Plan, under clause 4.10 of the S106. The restrictions placed on the Crick over the past two years have resulted in physical exhibitions having to be suspended. With the continued relaxation of restrictions, the Crick is seeking to take a proactive role, not just in providing new physical exhibitions and outreach activities, but also in providing wider health and wellbeing education and awareness such as this programme. Together these activities exceed the Crick's formal obligations, but they are seeking to make up ground lost through the pandemic by providing new and innovative ways of engaging.

It is considered that the vinyls would be compliant with design policies set out by the Council and would assist the Crick to fulfil its wider commitments.

The proposed signage would provide benefits to the host building by offering an exhibition, free and open to all, to inform and inspire the general public about its work. The displays are considered an important component in bringing together the wider vision for the Crick and its status within the local community and further afield. The proposals will contribute to creating an attractive temporary frontage to Midland Road, whilst respecting the nearby conservation areas.

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We trust that you have all the information you require to register this application. If, in the interim, you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague, Paul Willmott. As installation of the vinyls, in advance of the start of the exhibition in March 2024, is scheduled for the week commencing 12 February 2024, it would be appreciated if this application could be given priority so that installation can go ahead without delay. We would be grateful if the application can be validated/determined ahead of the exhibition start date.

We look forward to your formal acknowledgment of the application in due course and hope that you will view the enclosed proposals positively.

Yours sincerely,
for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

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