

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

REF: QE/011.061

THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The proposal site is a piece of undeveloped land located adjacent to 135 Finchley Road to the north and Swiss Cottage Underground Station to the south. The site, flanked by high rise buildings, is currently partially screened by a blue painted hoarding to the Finchley Road frontage and Swiss Cottage Underground Station boundary.

The site overall comprises a generally rectangular plot of land located between Swiss Terrace/Belsize Road to the rear and fronting onto Finchley Road, a multi-lane carriageway leading from the north into central London. The frontage is generally commercial with the location dominated by the scale and bulk of the surrounding high rise buildings and the road infrastructure.

PLANNING HISTORY

The site has been vacant for a number of years and there appears to be no recorded planning history.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to install a single, modern, digital media display system mounted on an architectural monopole, with the option of either a PL380 (7.5m x 5.025m) or PL240 (6.1m x 4.1m) display panel, facing nearside north bound traffic. The proposed media display will incorporate all the up-to-the-minute green technologies: –

- The latest highly efficient LEDs,
- high grade power supply and LED drivers that maximise the most efficient and economic use of energy,
- intelligent brightness control,
- RoHS compliant – meets international RoHS standards.
- The proposals' LED technology fulfils the desire to reduce the carbon footprint of modern advertising – LED units consume considerably less power than equivalent back light electronic billboards, have a considerably longer life, and, because they can be programmed remotely, there is no requirement for the sites to be attended on regular basis to carry out the physical change of the advertising medium that is required by internally illuminated billboards and 'traditional' hoardings, thus saving fuel and removing traffic from London's congested road network.

The proposal includes a comprehensive hard and soft landscaping treatment.

The attached location, elevation and visuals show the position of the display structure proposed, together with details of the boundary treatment and an outline of the landscape extent; plant species have not been advised at this time, but are to be discussed and agreed with the Council's Landscape department.

THE MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

The two issues with all advertisement applications are ‘public safety’ and ‘amenity’.

In the matter of public safety, having taken full account of the guidelines set out in PPG19, Appendix B to the Annex to Circular 03/2007, the local traffic history of the immediate and wider road network, it is considered that the proposal would not lead to any highway or public safety issue.

The proposed display will be well presented to the roadside, and although the display would be in modern digital format, it would only display static images with images being changed electronically, rather than the site being visited fortnightly as is currently traditional.

The proposal will not interfere with any CCTV, statutory signage or signals, or any traffic speed control apparatus.

In terms of amenity, the location is within a generally commercial frontage and setting, where the display of commercial advertisement, in scale with adjacent buildings, is an acceptable feature; there are amenity advantages to the proposal:

- The hard and soft landscaping will make a vast improvement to the area, add interest and have a significant beneficial effect on the visual amenity of the locality.
- The existing builders hoarding is somewhat of an eyesore, replacement with high quality metal railings will be a huge improvement and ‘open up’ the visual panorama.
- The proposed media display will be incorporated into an architectural designed host support structure thereby overcoming the environmental criticisms often associated with the purely functional display structures that have traditionally been the norm.
- The design of the media unit and mounting reflect the vertical orientation of adjacent buildings; the lightweight design will be aesthetically acceptable.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will result in an improvement to the amenities of the location, together with a new point of interest. The proposal will not have a detrimental effect on public safety.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

In addition to the five standard conditions, a further condition would be appropriate as follows.

‘The display shall not be installed on the site until a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented not later than 6 months from the date the display is first used. If within a period of 3 years from the date of planting of any tree or shrub, or any replacement thereof, dies, another of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted in the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written approval to any variation.’