

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	16/01/2015
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	N/A
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Leela Muthoora			2014/7046/A	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
Bupa House 15-19 Bloomsbury Way London WC1A 2BA			Site location plan; 94808 RevA; Site Location Plan	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Display of an internally illuminated cube sign to Bloomsbury Way elevation.				
Recommendation(s):		Refuse advertisement consent		
Application Type:		Advertisement Consent		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Highways Planning: Object on the grounds of potential hazard/distraction for drivers.</p> <p>Conservation and Urban Design: Objection on the ground that the sign will adversely affect the character and appearance of the host property and the conservation area.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	N/A					

Site Description

The site is Bupa House previously known as Chesterfield House, 15-19 Bloomsbury Way, a non-residential building used as the headquarter offices of Bupa. The building comprises of 6 main storeys plus a triple height mansard. It is constructed in red brick and has classical stone detailing with double height windows at ground floor.

The location of the proposed sign is on an existing plinth at ground floor level on the Bloomsbury Way elevation which forms the side elevation to Bupa House.

Bloomsbury Way comprises of predominantly non-residential buildings with some retail and restaurants and some residential at upper floor levels.

Bloomsbury Way is a highly controlled road where vehicular traffic is narrowed to a central single lane heading one-way north-east with bus lanes either side heading in a both directions. There are traffic lights with pedestrian crossings at either end of the building boundary.

The building is identified as a positive contributor within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is located next to Grade II listed buildings at 20-21 Bloomsbury Way and Grade II* listed buildings at 5-6 Bloomsbury Square.

Relevant History

9401544 *Planning permission granted: 24/05/1995*

Internal refurbishment creating new floor space, change of use of part of ground floor and basement from use as Bank to offices and external alterations including the creation of a new entrance in Bury Place and service access in Barter Street.

9580055 *Advertisement consent part approved/part refused: 22/06/1995*

Approved: The Display of:

- a) 1 directional and 5 corporate signs, two on either side of the Barter Street entrance, one in Bloomsbury Way and the rest on the Bury Place elevation;
- b) 6 logo signs, one on the window of each corner of the building and two on the glass doors on either side of the revolving door of the main entrance.

Refused: The display of: 6 flagpoles 3 on the Bloomsbury Way and 3 on the Bury Place elevations at first floor level

Relevant policies

NPPF 2012

The London Plan 2011

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy and Development Policies 2010

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2013

Chapter 1 Design, Section 8 Advertisements

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

Assessment

1. Background & proposal

Planning permission was granted in 1995 for alterations including the creation of a new entrance in Bury Place and advertisement consent was granted for signage including the company plaque sign on the stone plinth on Bloomsbury Way.

Advertisement consent is now sought for the display of an internally illuminated sign on the top of the stone plinth on Bloomsbury Way at ground floor level.

The sign would be internally illuminated, measuring 1m (height) x 1m (width) x 1m (depth) and project 1.5m from the elevation of the building. The sign would be 2.1m from the ground to the base of the sign and 3.2m from the face of the sign to the edge of the pavement. The luminance level would be 540.000 cd/m and of a static nature.

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 permits the Council to only consider amenity and the public safety matters in determining advertisement consent applications. The Council also has to take account of the impact of the signage on a heritage asset, which in this is the Bloomsbury conservation area.

2. Design

CPG 1 Design Section 8.5 states that the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account the character and design of the property, its surroundings and alter the external fabric of the building as little as possible'. The size of the sign is unduly dominant and appears out of scale with the host building and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The sign would be highly visible and prominent; its location on the existing plinth would dominate and obscure the architectural features of the windows in the centre of the Bloomsbury Way elevation at ground floor level. These windows form a central feature of single height windows, in contrast to the double height windows on either side, and are set within classical stone detailing with rusticated surround on the façade of the Bloomsbury way elevation. The proposed cube sign by reason of its size and prominent position on the existing plinth would appear awkward and detract from the form of the building and fail to integrate with the buildings design.

Although the corporate design is unique it is not considered to be compatible with the host building or surroundings. The materials and the method of illumination are unsympathetic to the design of the host building and not considered acceptable in the conservation area.

The sign is located at an unusual position below fascia level on the existing plinth at a height of 2100mm to 3100mm which would be visually obtrusive.

The proposed luminance level of 540.000 cd/m is close to the upper limit of permitted level of luminance as stated in the Advertisements Regulations. The sign consists of three 1m² panels, each

with illuminated lettering at a height of 400mm by a width of 902mm, in total, creating an illuminated surface area of 1.08m². As a result, the luminance levels would be dominant in its location and impact on the host building and surrounding buildings and conservation area.

The sign would be unduly obtrusive to the townscape and may result in the disturbance of residents or occupiers of the host building and surrounding buildings.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy states that 'illuminated signage can have a major impact in conservation areas. A proliferation of signage, even of an appropriate design, could harm the character of the Conservation Area.' In the immediate vicinity there are signs on the retail unit, opposite the site at 29 Bloomsbury Way and its Bury Place elevation. The signs were granted advertisement consent in 2009 as they replaced internally illuminated fascia and projecting box signs with externally illuminated signs which were considered more appropriate to the conservation area. No additional illuminated signs have been granted consent on Bloomsbury Way.

It is considered that the size, siting and method of illumination would be unduly dominant in its location and cannot be considered an appropriate addition to a building identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area. It is considered that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host building, the street scene and the conservation area.

3. Public Safety

An objection regarding from Highways Planning has been received. The objection relates to the size, siting, intensity and surface area of illumination of the site which the Highways Planning Officer is concerned would be unduly dominant in the street scene and the use of colour may be misinterpreted as an emergency signal. The positioning of the sign places it at drivers' eye level and would cause a distraction to vehicular traffic.

This objection has been taken into account. However it is not considered permission could be reasonably refused on this basis due to the static nature of the sign (i.e. the sign is not revolving or flashing).

4. Recommendation

The proposed advertisement by reason of its location, size and method of illumination would harm the visual amenity of the host building, street scene and Bloomsbury Conservation Area contrary to policies CS5, CS 14; DP24, DP25 of the Local Development Framework and is therefore recommended for refusal.