

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT
APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT
45 NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON WC1A 1BH**

1. DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION

1.1 Display of one micromesh PVC scaffold screening shroud, incorporating one advertisement, attached to the façades of the site fronting New Oxford Street and West Central Street, for a temporary period of 10 months. It is proposed that the shroud will be attached above ground floor level onto the scaffolding which will be erected to facilitate the works. Parts of the scaffolding and shroud not covered by the advertisement will incorporate a 1:1 replica of the facade of the building. As works involve the entire corner site (including the elevations on West Central Street) a large proportion of the scaffolded area and shroud will be covered by this 1:1 building imagery.

1.2 The scaffolded New Oxford Street elevation measures 240sqm. The site falls within a conservation area, and the “10% rule” in Camden’s Planning Guidance on Design therefore applies. We are proposing an advert that measures 24sqm (6m wide x 4m high) which should be considered proportionate and compliant with Camden’s Planning Guidance. The advert has been carefully positioned on the scaffold shroud so as to fit neatly within the building features depicted on the 1:1 illustration, and as such seeks to respect its immediate surroundings. All banner specifications are set out in the schedule of drawings (drawing number PY2425-007).

1.3 This impressive building is in need of substantial works and the revenue from the advertisement will help subsidize the costs associated with building works that will help improve the contribution that the application site makes to the conservation area. Please refer to the Schedule of Works and the Photographic Survey of Condition that are supplied as part of this application.

1.4 The applicant, King Media, is one of the UK’s leading exponents of large scale illustrated shrouds and scaffold safety screens. The Company has carried out a number of similar screening projects in London and other cities across the UK and is a pioneer in the innovative use of new display techniques for screening construction sites and buildings.

1.5 The temporary shroud will be in situ displaying advertisements during the period of the scheduled works to the property.

2 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Within the wider planning framework, there are some controls specific to shroud advertisements. Shroud/banner advertising falls under the definition of an advert requiring express planning consent from the local planning authority. In making their decision, the two issues the local planning authority can consider are:

- The impact on amenity (visual, aural of the immediate neighborhood);
- Impact on public safety.

2.2 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and promotes the positive improvement of the built environment; it encourages local planning authorities to work with applicants to foster a positive approach to planning.

2.3 Paragraphs 18-20 clearly define the Government's key policy objective: to encourage economic growth and build a strong competitive economy in order to create jobs and prosperity "significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system". Advertising plays an important role in stimulating growth by promoting commercial activities, stimulating spending and attracting investment.

2.4 Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 18b-005) specifically relates to shroud and banner advertisements and states that "buildings which are being renovated or undergoing major structural work and which have scaffolding or netting around them may be considered suitable as temporary sites for shroud advertisements or large 'wrap' advertisements covering the face, or part of the face, of the building." These advertisements will require express consent.

2.5 Local planning authorities can formulate their own specific policies indicating what detailed considerations they take account of. These policies and/or guidance statements should not be the only deciding factor and each case should be considered on a site-specific basis. Camden Council's own policies and guidance accepts on a temporary basis shroud/banner advertisements where used to shield unsightly construction works to a building.

2.6 The Council's Planning Guidance on Design (Advertisements, Signs and Hoardings) states that good quality advertisements which respect the architectural features of the host building are acceptable. The guidance states that shroud advertisements can help shield unsightly construction work. Shroud advertisements will be acceptable where they contain a 1:1 image of the host building, and where the advertisement, in conservation areas, covers no more than 10% of the scaffolded elevation.

2.7 The temporary nature of the shroud only being required until the works are completed needs to be taken fully into account.

3 SITE LOCATION/DESCRIPTION

3.1 The host building comprises a large corner site of this city block. The proposed shroud is to be placed on the façades of New Oxford Street and West Central Street. The site is located at the Southern end of Camden Borough in a central London location attracting the usual mix of shopping, nightlife and tourists' accommodation. The general character of the area is commercial with the mix of uses largely comprising retail and related uses at ground level and commercial offices above.

4 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The freehold of the site is owned by Fred Hill Properties Ltd. The Applicant is working closely with the Owner who is looking to raise additional funding which will contribute to the significant works needed at the property. The Owner has entered into an agreement with King Media Limited who will sell advertising on the shroud some of the revenue generated can be used towards the cost of some of the works to the external parts of the building. The majority of these works are detailed in the works schedules and plans accompanying the application.

4.2 This project and proposed works are significant and will bring a positive contribution to the area. These works will certainly enhance the character and appearance of both the building and this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area causing no harm to locality and surrounding buildings. To implement this permission the building will need to be scaffolded and shrouded. The applicant will be working closely with contractors to achieve the project aims including the overall programme of works and scheduling.

4.3 Included in the significant works schedule will be the major refurbishment of the façades at ground, first and second floor levels as well as the third floor parapet and roof. The buildings facades will be brought up to 'like new' standard prior to the removal of the shroud and scaffold. On a building of this size the refurbishment of the facades is a substantial project in itself, funding from the advertising shroud which is the subject of the application will also be used for this type of cosmetic work to the building. This will undoubtedly create an improved presence of the building in the street scene.

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4.4 The scaffold safety screen is, in any event, a Health & Safety requirement while the works are carried out to the building. The screening is a highly effective measure in preventing debris falling whilst also protecting the façade(s) of the building while works are being undertaken in a much more efficient way than traditional scaffold sheeting. The safety screen has many applications in addition to those mentioned; not least weather protection, which allows the works to continue during adverse conditions. Further, given the proximity to the streets (on all sides) an additional screen of this nature is highly advisable.

4.5 It is not proposed to illuminate the advertisement due to the sensitiveness of the conservation area.

4.6 The colour and content of the advertisement display panel will vary during the period, however it will consist of simple graphics and limited typography, complying with the standards and regulations laid down in the Code of Advertisers Practice by the Advertising Standards Authority.

4.7 The screen/shroud would be of a high quality, constructed from micromesh PVC and would be maintained to a very high standard, incorporating a replica façade of the building underneath. This form of PVC mesh allows for both light and air circulation within the building being shrouded. Fred Hill Properties Ltd has informed the applicant they are satisfied the shroud meets their operational requirements for the use of the building. The materials are capable of being recycled. The appearance and maintenance of the shroud/screen to this high standard is of significant benefit. If the Applicant was not involved in this project Owner would use the existing and standard scaffolding plastic sheeting/netting. This type of screening normally becomes ragged and tatty fairly quickly and is not usually that well maintained. This type of sheeting/shroud will fail to maintain and improve the visual amenity of the area whereas the 1:1 building imagery shroud incorporating the advertising that this application is the subject of will, for the temporary period it is in situ, enhance the appearance of what will be recognisably a site under construction.

5 RELEVANT SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 This application needs to be fully considered in the context of its temporary nature where permission is sought only for a period of 10 months. The following section deals with the impact on amenity and safety along with other relevant considerations.

5.2 The general criteria used when assessing any public safety issues where advertisements are concerned is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on Advertisements. The proposal has been assessed against those tests. The type and location of the proposed advertisement display will not create a hazard or danger for the following reason:

- The type of advertising display proposed does not require a close study nor would it obstruct or confuse any road users in terms of their use of the road, statutory road signs or traffic control.
- The proposed display is not unusual. It is static and will have a good range of visibility, providing appropriate sight lines, thus the display will not appear as a sudden feature or present itself as a road hazard.
- The simple typography and graphic elements normal to this type of advertisement display media are specifically designed to be readily assimilated, and understood by road and pedestrian users in the vicinity.
- Implications to road users will be negligible. The site is within an area where traffic access and speeds are controlled.

5.3 Having carefully considered the level and method of illumination and positioning of the shroud banner advertisement, the applicant is satisfied that there is no impact on public safety or highway safety. Both the national and local Camden Council policies encourage improvements to the built environment and are permissive of this type of proposal.

5.4 The site is in a busy and vibrant commercial location where a variety of different forms of signage are commonplace.

5.5 The shroud adds a temporary addition to the landscape of the area and will enliven the vista and provide a point of interest to the frontage whilst works take place to the building. In terms of street scene the positioning and replica

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façade imaging with advert inset of the size proposed will give those passing through or already familiar with the area the sense of the existing road layout and the building underneath in the street context.

5.6 There is a significant and longer-term public benefit to be derived from approving this proposal as part of the overall project. Improving the building will attract future tenants to the property and area whilst also improving and enlivening the locality. The external appearance of the building will be improved and contribute positively to the street scene in the future and the advert shroud as a temporary measure during construction will fully support the project to achieve these aims.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Council's own policies on scaffold/shroud advertisements are that they are acceptable where associated with works and for a temporary period. In this case, the location of the advertisement on the shroud, the scale, illumination and context are appropriate to the building and it is acceptable in highway safety terms.

6.2 It is felt that this application proposal meets the criteria of both the local and national policy considerations. In such a busy commercial location, the proposal would provide an aesthetically acceptable, temporary addition to the street scene. The context and appearance of the host building will remain very clear for all to see.

6.3 The display for a temporary period of a well maintained shroud advertisement is far superior to the type of netting or plastic that would ordinarily be used by a building contractor. High quality well maintained screening to what would otherwise be a bland and untidy introduction to the street scene of the screen, without replica imaging and advertisement, benefits the visual amenity of the location during the temporary period of the building works.

6.4 Camden Council, like other authorities, is keen to secure improvements to the buildings and the public realm within their area. This is why temporary shrouds and advertisements are recognized to have a place in locations such as this. The Council will be aware that planning permissions for many similar applications have been granted. A similar proposal for a temporary scaffold banner was allowed at appeal at 187 Camden High Street, the appeal Ref: APP/X5210/H/08/2091485. It should be noted that in this case the two banners took up half of the overall shroud area, the proposed displays in this instance would make up a much smaller percentage of the overall shroud itself. In the formal decision letter the appointed inspector, Mr Emm states at paragraph 6:

"This is a vibrant bustling commercial area and to my mind the proposed scheme would form a acceptable temporary addition to the townscape. Given the need for a safety shroud, I believe the proposed sign would be an improvement on the otherwise alternative utilitarian vista, bringing colour and interest to the townscape while refurbishment work is being undertaken. For the duration of the refurbishment the sign would preserve the character of the area as a whole."

6.5 In light of this appeal decision the council then granted consent for another temporary scaffold shroud nearby at 11-13 Camden High Street, Ref: 2010/1299/A. A recent approval has been granted under 2013/5984/A dated 24 October 2013 for an advert shroud at 174 Camden High Street, a property bounded by three roads in a similar way to the application site also within a Conservation Area.

6.6 Amongst many applications that have been granted; similar advertising shrouds include applications with reference numbers; 2013/4086/A at 150 Holborn and also 2011/2591/A near Centrepont.

6.7 The proposal will not detract from the appearance of the surrounding site or the host building while the works are undertaken, nor would it be detrimental to public safety. The Applicant considers this application supports the longer-term refurbishment of the building.

6.8 In conclusion therefore, I submit that the proposal will enable continued investment in this important building within the conservation area, shielding unsightly building works. The advertisement will be of a high quality and together with the 1:1 shroud imagery, will greatly improve the appearance of the scaffolding, softening the temporary impact that necessary scaffolding may have on the conservation area. Any negative impact on the setting of the conservation area will be minimal and temporary, and indeed on balance in the long run the effect of the proposal on

amenity will be positive. Details of the timetable and specifications for the works are set out in the accompanying Schedule of Works document.

6.9 I have set out in detail above how this proposal should be considered policy compliant. Should the LPA take a different view I would refer to paragraph 140 of the NPPF which requires authorities, where proposals are considered to depart from policy, to weigh up the benefits that the proposal will deliver.

6.10 The Applicant is very happy to discuss the details and/or provide any further information requested by the Council for their consideration of the application. It is hoped that the Council will consider this application favorably and grant the permission sought.

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