

Delegated Report			Expiry Date:	01/06/2017
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Matthias Gentet			2017/1987/A	
Application Address			Application Type:	
77 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 2HG			Advertisement Consent	
1st Signature	2nd Signature (If refusal)	Conservation	Recommendation(s):	
			Refuse Advertisement Consent	
Proposal(s)				
Display of an internally illuminated LED digital display board to Tottenham Street elevation at first floor level				

Consultations

Summary of consultation responses:

An objection was received from **Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX**, summarised as follow:

- Located on the wall at a prominent and busy location within the Charlotte Street conservation area;
- Both these buildings (No1 Tottenham Street & No77 Tottenham Court Road) are described as positive contributors in the Charlotte Street CA audit 2008;
- Illuminated display would face north onto the Whitfield Gardens public open space;
- Most of the buildings surrounding Whitfield Gardens public open space are also positive contributors;
- Heal's at 191-199 Tottenham Court Road is Grade II* listed, and Glen House at 200-204 Tottenham Court Road is Grade II listed;
- The gardens and its piazza is well used and is an important open space enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors;
- This large and intrusive advertising display have a negative impact on the amenity of people using it;
- The media screen will be directly visible to users of Whifield Gardens;
- It would also pose a distraction to drivers of vehicles using the soon-to-be two-way Tottenham Court Road approaching the junction of Tottenham Street;
- The proposal would have a negative impact on the conservation area including listed buildings, impact negatively on the amenity of Whitfield Gardens;

Officer's Response:

See paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5, 2.9-2.10, 3.1-3.2

An objection was received from **Charlotte Street Association, 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX**, summarised as follow:

- Hoarding would be detrimental to the quality of the conservation area, the amenity of the adjoining POS and incompatible with the objectives of the West End Project;
- The Council has previously secured a discontinuance notice for this site it would be totally inconsistent if it were now to allow a replacement hoarding.

Officer's Response:

See paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5, 2.9-2.10.

Site Description

The site address is a three-storey building with mansard roof. It is located on the south-east side of Tottenham Court Road and on the corner with Tottenham Street, with retail unit at ground floor level.

The building is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area with Bloomsbury Conservation Area opposite, and is noted as being a positive contributor to the conservation area in the Charlotte Street Conservation Appraisal.

Relevant History

Site Address:

2003/0558/P – (granted on 01/08/2017) - Installation of new shopfront;

2003/0557/A – (granted on 01/08/2017) - Display of internally illuminated individual lettering on fascia on both frontages and 2 x projecting signs, one on each frontage;

8501083 – (granted on 18/09/1985) - The installation of a new shopfront with canopy and formation of new entrance to the basement betting office;

8500053 – (granted on 30/04/1985) - Change of use of the basement from retail storage to betting office.

Adjacent Sites History:

2015/1209/A – (**Refuse and Warning of Enforcement Action to be Taken on 24/04/2015**) - Display of a digital illuminated signage measuring 6.6m x 3.4m x 0.4m at 1.9m from ground level - Adjacent to Whitefield Memorial Church, Tottenham Court Road.

Other Sites in Camden:

2016/3005/A – (**refused on 15/08/2016**) - Display of an internally illuminated LED digital display sign and mural surround - Adjacent to Camden Town Underground Station, Camden High Street – (**Dismissed on appeal on 03/02/2017 ref: APP/X5210/Z/16/3160523**)

2016/2888/A – (**refused on 11/08/2016**) - Temporary display of internally illuminated LED display board signage (measuring 3m in height by 12m in width and 0.6m in depth) to Andrew Borde Street and Charing Cross Road elevation from 01/09/2016 to 23/05/2018 – Land at St Giles Circus, 126-136 Charing Cross Road – (**Dismissed on appeal on 13/02/2017 ref: APP/X5210/Z/16/3158874**)

2015/6179/A – (**refused on 01/02/2016**) - Installation of 1 x digital LED display screen (3.846m x 6.596m) - Adjacent to Camden Town Underground Station, Camden High Street;

2015/5215/A – (**refuse on 19/11/2016**) - Installation of double-sided structure to existing bus shelter no. 0107/1029 for display of digital screen and non-illuminated static poster panel - Bus Shelter outside 167-169 Camden High Street.

2015/3210/A – (**refused on 24/08/2015 and dismissed on appeal on 18/11/2015**) - Display of 1x digital display screen (6.0 x 39.8 metres) to Tottenham Court Road elevation at 1st and 2nd floor level - St Giles Hotel, Bedford Avenue.

2014/4102/A – (**refused on 18/07/2014 and dismissed on appeal on 08/01/2014**) - Display of a free standing internally illuminated sign - On the corner of York Way and Freight lane.

2014/4108/A – (refused on 18/07/2014 and dismissed on appeal on 04/12/2014) - Display of a free standing internally illuminated sign in the forecourt - British Telecom, 138 Maida Vale.

The following enforcement cases are to be taken into consideration as being relevant to the refusal of this proposal, representing and supporting the Council's initiative to remove unsightly hoardings:

EN16/0004 - Pitch outside Kings Cross Station - 2 digital boards to side elevations.

EN15/0447 - 226 Camden High Street - Display of a large digital sign to side elevation without advert consent. Changed from a large poster board.

EN15/0910 - Erection of illuminated animated advertising sign at 1st floor level.

EN09/0102 – Land adjoining 279 Finchley Road - display of two advert hoardings (**Appeal against discontinuance notice dismissed: 26/02/2013**)

EN07/0473 – Central School of Speech and Drama College Crescent - Display of two advert hoardings, each 1 x 48 sheet (**Appeal against discontinuance notice dismissed 21/05/2013**)

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

Core Strategy Policies

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

CS17 – Making Camden a safer place

Development Policies

DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport

DP21 – Development connecting to the highway network

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Draft Local Plan (2016)

A1 – Managing the impact of the development

D1 – Design

D2 – Heritage

D4 – Advertisements

T1 – Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

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

Camden Planning Guidance 2011 (as amended)

CPG1 (Design) Chapter 8

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The London Plan 2016

Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2008)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (April 2011)

Planning Enforcement Initiative to remove unsightly advertisement hoardings in the Borough

1. Proposal

1.1 The proposed LED digital display board would measure approximately 5.1m in height x 3.4m in width x 0.35m in depth (thickness), occupying an area of approximately of 17sqm. It would be located at first floor level on the north facing Tottenham Street elevation on the corner of Tottenham Street and Tottenham Court Road, facing the open space of Whitfield Gardens.

2. Assessment

2.1 The principle considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Impact on Amenity
- Impact on Public Safety

Amenity

2.2 The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. The following considerations contained within policies CS5 and CS14 of the Core Strategy and policies DP24 and DP25 of the Development Policies are relevant to the application: development should consider the principle of the development; and the impacts of the development on the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings.

2.3 Camden Planning Guidance CPG1 (Design) states that 'hoarding advertising may be acceptable where it satisfactorily relate to the scale of the host building and its surroundings. Advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings. Any advertisements on or near a listed building or in a conservation area must not harm their character and appearance.'

2.4 Draft Local Plan (2016) policy D4 states that the council will require advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. Advertisements must respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building and be of the highest standard of design, material and detail. The policy states that the council will resist advertisements that 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; or impact upon public safety.

2.5 The application site is located within the Charlotte Street conservation area, wherein the Council has a statutory duty, under section 72 (Conservation Areas) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

2.6 With respect to advertisements the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy states that *'building frontages, roads and pavements are all important elements of the public realm and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have an overall detrimental impact on the character of the area. Such additions can include visual clutter from excessive signage (in particular along Tottenham Court Road including advertising hoardings, large fascia signs, banner signage and estate agents boards)'*. It goes on to say that *'the quality of the public realm and particularly the pedestrian spaces can make an important contribution to the character of the area. The quality can be adversely affected by a*

range of factors including the proliferation of visual clutter for example signage.'

2.7 The host building is identified in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as being a positive contributor. Although the ground floor commercial elevations have seen alterations over the years with the replacement of shopfronts and signage, the upper floors retain their unspoiled original character. The flank elevation upon which the sign is proposed to be located is particularly prominent in views from Tottenham Court Road and views into the Charlotte Street conservation area generally. This plain unobtrusive and original elevation is an important part of the building's composition and contribution to the conservation area. Due to its large size, prominent location and obtrusive method of illumination, the proposed sign would appear as an obtrusive alien and unsightly feature on this important original elevation, detrimentally altering the appearance of the host building and undermining its positive contribution to the conservation area. Additionally due to its prominence in views from Tottenham Court Road it is also considered that the sign would increase visual clutter and appear highly incongruous within the streetscene generally.

2.8 The proposed location is furthermore sensitive due to its proximity to the Grade II* listed Heal's building and Grade II listed Glen House located on the opposite side of Tottenham Court Road. It is also considered that the introduction of the proposed display board in this location would have a detrimental impact upon the setting of these listed buildings.

2.9 Overall the proposed sign is considered entirely inappropriate for this sensitive location. Due to its large size, prominent location and LED method of illumination, it is considered that it would harm the character and appearance of the host building, streetscene and conservation area, and the setting of adjacent listed buildings, contrary to CPG1 (Design), and policies CS14, DP25 and policies D2 and D4 of the Draft Local Plan.

3. Public Safety

3.1 Policy DP21 states that the Council will expect works affecting highways to:

- avoid disruption to the highway network and its function;
- avoid causing harm to highway safety or hinder pedestrian movement and avoid unnecessary street clutter;
- contribute to the creation of high quality streets and public spaces;

3.2 CPG1 (Design) states that advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety, such as being hazardous to vehicular traffic (e.g. emit glare), and that the Council is to ensure that an advertisement does not become unduly dominant in the streetscene, disturb adjoining residents at night, or cause safety hazards to drivers.

3.3 Policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Draft Local Plan states that advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety, including when advertisements:

- obstruct or impair sight lines to road users at junctions and corners;
- reduce the effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal;
- result in glare and dazzle or distract road users;
- distract road users because of their unusual nature;
- disrupt the free flow of pedestrian movement; or
- endanger pedestrians forcing them to step on to the road.

3.4 Tottenham Court Road forms part of the strategic road network and is therefore a busy traffic corridor. It is currently a one-way street in the northbound direction for vehicular traffic. However, the Council will be implementing significant alterations to the road network in the vicinity of the site as part of the West End Project (WEP) during the next 2 years. This

includes converting Tottenham Court Road to two-way operation, specifically for buses and cyclists. The project has been approved by Cabinet and funding is in place. It is therefore a committed project and this is a material planning consideration when assessing this application.

3.5 The Council's Transport section have been consulted and object to the proposal on the grounds that it would compromise vehicular and pedestrian safety. Transport for London (TfL) has published a document titled 'Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice'. This guidance suggests that digital advertising displays should be located in the nearside view (i.e. to the left as the road users looks ahead). The proposal fails to adhere to the TfL guidance in this regard. The consequence is that south bound road users would need to take their eyes off the road to view the digital advertising display as they approach it diverting their attention from the road and other road users.

3.6 Separately, there also is concern that eastbound road users on Tottenham Street would be distracted by the digital advertising display at a point where they need to be focussing on the road ahead as they approach the junction with Tottenham Court Road. Taking into account the large advertising face area of the proposed LED digital display board of 17sqm, once illuminated, the glare emitted from the board is also considered likely to distract drivers and other road users.

3.7 It is considered that due to the siting, size and method of illumination the proposed sign would represent a dangerous hazard in this busy location which experiences an exceptionally high volume of vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians As such it is considered contrary to Camden Planning Guidance and policy DP21 and policy D4 of the Draft Local Plan.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The proposed internally illuminated LED digital display board, by reason of its large size and scale and inappropriate sitting and method of illumination would appear incongruous and visually dominant, harming the character and appearance of the host building, streetscene and Charlotte Street Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings. The sign is also considered likely to distract drivers and other road users in this busy central London location, endangering pedestrian and highway safety.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Refuse Advertisement Consent.