

<b>Delegated Report</b>			<b>Expiry Date:</b>	18/04/2017
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Matthias Gentet			2017/1151/A	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Application Type:</b>	
148 Southampton Row London WC1B 5AG			Advertisement Consent	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Signature</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Signature (If refusal)</b>	<b>Conservation</b>	<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
			Refuse Advertisement Consent	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia and 1 x internally illuminated projecting signs.				
<b>Consultations</b>				
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		Consultations were not carried out for this application. No responses were received.		
<b>Site Description</b>				
<p>The site is a 7-storey C19 building, forming part of Russell Mansions, and is located on the north-eastern side of Southampton Row where there is a predominance of red brick buildings with contrasting white stone terracotta details. The ground floor is occupied by commercial units, all upper levels are residential. The flats' balconies at the front of the building are adorned with highly decorative railings, and decorative moulding details criss-crossing the façade such as friezes, capitals, pilasters, buttress.</p> <p>The building sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation area. Although it isn't listed, it is marked as a positive contributor in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal.</p>				
<b>Relevant History</b>				
<b>Site Address:</b>				
<p><u>2016/5418/P</u> – (granted on 06/04/2017) - Change of use from shop (A1) to massage and special treatments clinic (Sui Generis);</p> <p><u>2013/4204/A</u> – (granted on 16/09/2013) - Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign to betting shop (Class A2);</p> <p><u>2013/4044/P</u> - (granted on 16/09/2013) - Alterations to shopfront, replacement of door and installation of 3 x air conditioning units at rear basement level to betting shop (Class A2);</p> <p><u>2013/1425/P</u> – (granted on 22/05/2013) - Change of use of ground floor from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services) for the purposes of a licensed betting office;</p>				

## **Adjacent Sites History:**

### **No146:**

8600297 – (granted on 09/04/1986) - Installation of a new shopfront;

CA/2049/A – (granted on 28/07/1972) - A projecting box sign at No. 146, Southampton Row. Sign reads 146 LICENSED RESTAURANT in white letters on a green background.

### **No142:**

2013/2260/P – (granted on 19/06/2013) - Change of use from Retail (Class A1) to Currency Exchange (Class A2), installation of a new shopfront and ATM machine to the front elevation.

It must be noted that the new shopfronts and signage at **No150** (pharmacy), **No146** and **No140** do not have the required Planning Permissions and Advertisement Consents.

## **Site Enforcement History:**

EN17/0295 - Display of unauthorised internally illuminated fascia and projecting;

EN16/0677 - Change of use to massage centre, open very late;

## **Relevant policies**

### **Local Plan draft 2017**

A1 – Managing the Impact on Development

D1 – Design

D2 – Heritage

D3 – Shopfronts

D4 - Advertisements

### **Camden Planning Guidance 2015 (as amended)**

CPG1 – Chapter 7 & 8

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

### **The London Plan 2016**

### **Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (April 2011)**

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

### **Planning Enforcement Initiative to remove unsightly advertisement hoardings in the Borough**

## Assessment

### 1. Proposal and Background

1.1 Advertisement Consent is sought for the following:

The display of an internally illuminated fascia sign and an internally illuminated projecting sign.

1.2 The signage being already in place, consent is sought retrospectively. An Enforcement Case reference: EN17/0295 has been opened as a result. *[See Relevant History above]*

1.3 A change of use application reference: 2016/5418/P has been granted on 06/04/2017 (Change of use from shop (A1) to massage and special treatments clinic (Sui Generis). The assessment of this application is made independently from the recently granted change of use application.

1.4 The site address is one of four commercial units occupying the ground floor level of Russell Mansions, and is located at the far left hand side to the residential entrance at No144.

### 2. Assessment

The issues are Conservation and design and Public Safety.

### 3. Conservation and design

3.1 One of considerations in the determination of this application is the impact of the proposal on the appearance of the Russell Mansions and the commercial units occupying the ground floor level, the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the streetscape/highstreet.

3.2 The proposed internally illuminated fascia sign is to measure approximately 3.78m in width by 0.78m in height and 0.10m in depth/thickness. It is affixed striding across the location of an historical arch – and above the glazing frontage - that used to form part of the commercial design of the frontages. No148 is the only missing original commercial frontage, and it is believed this must have been either removed or hidden under rendering or other type of materials sometime in the 1950s or 1960s. The advertisement on the fascia consist of 'W SPA' in white and in large letters on the left hand side of the sign, and the description of the type of operation, the contact phone number and foreign writing in pink on the right hand side. Whole on a black background. Only the letters and symbols are illuminated.

3.3 The proposed internally illuminated projecting sign measures approximately 0.61 in height by 0.94 in width and at least 0.10m-0.15m in depth/thickness. The latter is assumed to be so as the exact measurement of the thickness of the projecting sign have not been provided. Similarly to the fascia sign, it is containing 'W SPA' letters in white and at the top, with the type of operation described below in pink letters, all on a black background. Only the letters are illuminated.

3.4 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal refers to the *'significant pressure for new development within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Developments over the recent decades have influenced the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Other factors that have influenced the character and appearance of the area include the cumulative impact of advertisements and signage.'*

3.5 Camden Planning Guidance CPG1 (Design) re-inforces the concerns raised by the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal by stating that *'advertisements and signs should respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and setting. All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings and be constructed of materials that are*

*sympathetic to the host building and the surrounding area.'*

3.6 CPG1 (Design) also further states that '*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 and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings.*'

3.7 The historical arch no longer being an integral part of the shopfront, the proposed fascia, by virtue of its size, scale, design, position and also method of illumination, sits awkwardly abutting the ornate cornice on the right hand side corner, and is pressing against the decorative capital also on the right. The shape and bulkiness of the fascia sign is producing a totally unbalanced feature and is breaking the continuity of the arch design of the other three adjacent units to the right of the site unit.

3.8 The proposed fascia sign is contrary to CPG1 by way that it isn't demarking the historical design and location of the original arch details. Even with the arch being no longer a physical attribute, it would still be expected of any fascia sign to reproduce the arch design and fit within the historical arch area, thus producing a continuity of lines in tempo with the adjacent arched fascias. It is too large, bulky, spread across an area that was never designed to incur the addition of a sign, and is detrimental to the character and appearance Russell Mansions.

3.9 The projecting sign is bulky and rather unattractive. It is affixed onto the rendered shopfront elevation by means of an extended bracket that allows for the box sign to go beyond the adjacent decorative column to be fully visible. The bracket projects an additional distance of approximately 0.20m-0.30m. The exact and overall projection can therefore only be guessed, based on visual images. Its location is highly inappropriate and contrary to CPG1 (Design).

3.10 It must be noted that a large amount of such signs are in situ without the required Advertisement Consent. Such examples can be seen at No150 (pharmacy) – excessively protruding internally illuminated projecting sign - and No146 – 2no internally illuminated hanging signs on long projecting brackets and affixed in unacceptable location: the highest one is attached onto the decorative cornice below the first floor bay windows, and the second one is slightly lower but in such a place that it is obscuring the decorative mouldings of the right hand side capital.

3.11 By virtue of their size, design, location and method of illumination, the proposed internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs are considered be incongruous fixtures and create visual clutter, and are therefore inappropriate and detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the streetscape/highstreet.

#### **4. Public Safety**

4.1 The illumination of the proposed fascia and projecting signs is not a cause for concerns, and as such, there is no impact on the Public Safety.

#### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 The proposed internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs, by reason of their size, design, location and method of illumination would result in incongruous additions and visual clutter which would be highly detrimental to the appearance and character of the host building, the streetscape/highstreet, and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of

the Bloomsbury Conservation Area contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS5, CS14, DP24, DP25, DP26, A1, D2 and D4.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 The application is recommended for refusal.