

Delegated Report			Expiry Date:	10/10/2016
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Matthias Gentet			2016/4534/A	
Application Address			Application Type:	
102 Southampton Row LONDON WC1B 4BL			Advertisement Consent	
1st Signature	2nd Signature (If refusal)	Conservation	Recommendation(s):	
			Refuse Advertisement Consent with Warning of Prosecution Action to be Taken	
Proposal(s)				
Display of an internally illuminated fascia sign with return down the right hand side of the shopfront, and an internally illuminated projecting sign [retrospective].				
Consultations				
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>An objection from the Owner/Occupier at 16 Ormonde Mansions, 106a Southampton Road, summarised as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Installing advertising and signage without making the application first; ○ Signage is far brighter and more prominent than used by any other premises in the building; ○ Building is identified of positive influence in the Bloomsbury Conservation Plan; ○ Additions detract significantly from the correct appearance and character of the building; ○ The addition of the extra cladding/fascia on top of the masonry of the frontage at the right hand side will serve as a moisture and water trap, cause decay and dilapidation of the fabric of the building; ○ This business should content with normal shop signage in keeping with that of the other shop fronts in the building. <p><u>Officer's Response:</u></p> <p><i>The signage as a whole is considered unacceptable- see assessment below.</i></p>		
Site Description				
<p>The site address is a large 5-storey 19th century red brick building (Ormonde Mansions) on the eastern side of Southampton Row, consisting of 6no commercial units at ground floor level (restaurant, coffee shop, estate agent...), and residential to upper floors with 3 separate entrances spread at regular internal providing a symmetry of design.</p> <p>The site unit is operating as a bakery (Class A1) and is located to the right of the far right residential entrance to the flats above. It is in close proximity to the Grade II Victoria House and to Bloomsbury Place – leading to The British Museum - formed of Grade II terraced houses both to the south west of Ormonde Mansions.</p> <p>The building sits with Bloomsbury Conservation but is not listed. Nevertheless, it is identified as being a positive contributor to the conservation area in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal.</p>				

Southampton Row leads onto Great Russell Square to the north and Kingsway to the south.

Relevant History

Site History:

2008/0236/A – (granted on 14/04/2008) - Retention of internally illuminated fascia sign, projecting sign and awning.

AD2186 – (granted on 14/02/1983) - The display of an internally illuminated fascia sign.

Site Enforcement History:

EN16/0877 - Unauthorized change of use to A3;

EN16/0888 - Unauthorised display of a large internally illuminated fascia sign and internally illuminated projecting sign, and new shopfront. Use class may need checking - Bakery may be operating beyond its A1 use class.

EN16/0901 - Installation of an extraction vent to the rear of the premises which carries smells to the rear windows of flats at Ormonde Mansions.

Adjacent Sites History:

2016/4315/A – (granted on 29/09/2016) - Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign and a non-illuminated projecting sign - 84 Southampton Row.

2016/3654/A – (recommended for approval) - Display of 1 x non-illuminated, internally placed fascia panel, 1 x externally illuminated projecting sign, internally applied vinyl lettering, internally applied vinyl manifestations and 1 x internally applied opening hours vinyl - 2 Victoria House, 37-63 Southampton Row.

2016/4620/L – (recommended for approval) - Display of signage and installation of DDA sensor - 2 Victoria House, 37-63 Southampton Row.

2015/4637/A – (granted on 01/10/2015) - Installation of 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign - 156A Southampton Row.

2014/5491/A – (granted on 10/10/2014) - Display of 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign - Unit 2 Victoria House, 37-63 Southampton Row.

2014/5720/L – (granted on 10/10/2014) - Internal and external alterations in association with the display of 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign, 1 internally illuminated sign behind fascia glazing and 2 x window vinyl graphics applied to shop front - Unit 2, Victoria House, 37-63 Southampton Row.

Adjacent Site Enforcement History:

EN16/0467 - Unauthorised display of an internally illuminated projecting sign and awning – VegEat, 48-56 Kingsway.

EN16/0287 - Unauthorised shopfront and display of externally illuminated fascia sign and 2 x internally illuminated projecting sign prior to determination of advert consent application reference: 2016/1526/A - 86 Southampton Row.

EN16/0286 - Unauthorised display of 2 x internally illuminated projecting signs on either side of shopfront - 84 Southampton Row.

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

Development Policies

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

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

Camden Planning Guidance 2015 (as amended)

CPG1 (Design) Chapter 7 & 8

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 18th April 2011)

Assessment

1. Background

1.1 This application is a retrospective one as the internally illuminated projecting sign and fascia sign are already in situ.

1.2 In view of the inappropriateness of the development, an enforcement case has been opened under reference: EN16/0888 [See *Relevant History above*].

2. Proposal

2.1 This proposal is seeking advert consent for the display of an internally illuminated fascia sign continuing down along the right hand side of the glazed shopfront all the way to the ground, and an internally illuminated projecting sign affixed at fascia level.

2.2 The upper part of the fascia measures 5.9m in width, by 1.2m in height and 0.12m in depth or thickness, and is formed of 3 components:

- (i) White stone cladding forming background for two thirds of the fascia;
- (ii) Black and bronze design projecting out of the white stone cladding by 120mm at the upper 1/3 of the fascia, and continuing down the right side of the glazed shopfront to frame it; the bronze strip element is backlit;
- (iii) Circular logo sitting within the curved design of the right hand side of the fascia and is also formed of 3 components being:
 - a) raised circle with edges in black background 90mm thick;
 - b) raised illuminated red letters 30mm thick; and
 - c) raised white block letter sign reading 'Bakery' at the bottom of the circular sign 70mm thick, projecting past the edge of the black background.

The whole item is affixed on top of the flat white stone cladding background of the main fascia, providing an overall projection of 160mm.

2.3 The side part of the fascia returning down the side of the glazed frontage measures 4.2m in

height (taken from the top of the upper part of the fascia) and 2.9m height (taken from the base of the upper part of the fascia) by 0.8m in width (taken from the base of the upper part of the fascia) and 0.5m width at the largest part of the return which has a curved linear design by 0.12m in depth.

- 2.4 The projecting sign is similar to the fascia logo in design and size as it is a circular black roundel with projecting internally illuminated red block lettering but also has a bronze highlighter strip and no Bakery lettering.

3. Visual Amenity

Fascia Sign:

- 3.1 The internally illuminated fascia sign, with return down along with right hand side of the glazed frontage, is considered to be a bulky, unattractive, cumbersome and unduly dominant addition that creates visual clutter and directly disfigures the commercial frontage and, indirectly, the rest of the host building. It is an incongruous fixture that is considered highly inappropriate.
- 3.2 Camden Planning Guidance CPG1 (Design) clearly states that *'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 and will only be acceptable at fascia level, should respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and setting, serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings and be constructed of materials that are sympathetic to the host building, 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 fascia should be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should not extend below the capital as it would upset the overall balance and proportions of a shopfront or parade. Fascia signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features. Deep box fascias which project beyond the shopfront frame should be avoided. Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront.'*
- 3.3 This is clearly not the case here. The size and the scale of the actual fascia sign itself is not only overtly large in terms of its height and depth, but it is also spreads all the way down to pavement level by 'dripping' down on the right hand side of the glazed shopfront and is also covering the console and pilaster (capital, fluting and plinth) forming part of the historic architectural details of the building. The overall size of the fascia, taking account of both these elements, is excessive. Moreover it is designed using several different contrasting types of materials: stone cladding to work as a background to the two lower third part of the sign, thick red plastic internally illuminated letters that are projecting away from the fascia quite considerably, a logo sign on the right hand side of the fascia designed on the same principles and using same materials, and finally the top part of the fascia which also forms the return down the side of the shopfront is made of black aluminium highlighted by a shiny backlit bronze strip edge. This mixing of materials and colours and the layering of elements on top of each other all serve to emphasise the bulkiness, prominence and brashness of the fascia sign.
- 3.4 Adding to the already thick layers of the red letters and the extended design across the fascia and down the side of the shopfront, there is another thick white plastic 'Bakery' logo mounted on top of the 'Simit' logo accentuating the level of outward projection even further. The overall size and scale of the internally illuminated letters reading 'Simit sarayi' is too large and dominant.
- 3.5 The return down of the fascia straddles onto the glazing. The overall signage protrudes past the elevation of the residential portal entrance design of Ormonde Mansions by means of the exaggerated pronouncing of the black and bronze design element of the sign and added details of the circular sign (see 2.2 (iii) for details). The bronze element of the signage is internally illuminated.

- 3.6 The cutting of the black aluminium to fit around the steps of the capital belonging to Ormonde Mansions is crude in workmanship, with the gaps filled with black putty of some sort. The presence of the right hand framework strip is totally unjustified in terms of advertisement or indeed design ethos, given the presence of such array of publicity and colour at true fascia level.
- 3.7 The whole composition is totally unacceptable in terms of design, bulk, combinations of colours and materials. Although individually some elements may be acceptable in size or material, cumulatively they all contribute to the overall impression of excessive size, dominance and discord. Its visual impact is not discreet, compared to other shopfronts and signs along this parade, but instead appears brash and shouts for attention. It is harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and streetscene. It is contrary to design guidance in the CPG1 (Design) and also to the Council's policy CS14 which states that '*the Council requires developments of the highest standard of design, preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings.*'
- 3.8 Southampton Row has buildings of high architectural merit including some which are listed such as Victoria House (Grade II listed). The latter being in close proximity to the site address, the development will inadvertently have a negative impact and be harmful to the setting of this listed building and any others in the vicinity. It will also be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Projecting Sign:

- 3.9 The internally illuminated projecting sign is displayed on the left hand side of the fascia, affixed to the bottom part of the fascia, on the flat white stone cladding. Although its size and diameter is acceptable, it is bulky and unattractive due to the thickness of the projecting sign, the mix of colours with bronze edging, and the poor quality fixing bracket. A thinner sign such as a blade sign with external illumination – of the same logo design and size – would be better suited for the location, similar to the projecting signs of adjacent units.
- 3.10 The previous fascia sign in place for 'Pret a Manger' was smaller in height which minimized its impact on the host building and the street scene in terms of bulkiness. It was more respectful of the proportions and scale of the commercial frontage and the host building as a whole.

Method of Illumination:

- 3.11 Although some of signs within Southampton Row are internally illuminated, these are of reasonable size, and only the letters and/or logo are internally illuminated. There are many examples of externally illuminated projecting signs such as Café Nero, Frank Harris & Co, Tesco when operating next door at 100 Southampton Row. The adjacent Hilton Hotel has internally illuminated letters at fascia level and Spink opposite the site address has non-illuminated lettering fascia signs.
- 3.12 As such, the method of illumination of the proposed fascia and projecting signs, in view of the cumulative impact of all the various elements, is totally unacceptable and highly detrimental to the host building, the street and the conservation area as a whole.

4. Public Safety

- 4.1 Despite the concerns raised in the objection received in terms of the light pollution caused by the brightness of the signage, the level of illuminance has been annotated on the drawings to be at 140 cantigrat and 93 lumen. The excessive brightness, as reported by the objector, was not witnessed during the site visit which took place in the afternoon.
- 4.2 The institution of Lighting Professionals recommends that signs in urban setting should not

exceed 600cdm-2 up to 10sqm, and 300cdm-2 over 10sqm. If the details of the illuminance as annotated on the drawings are taken as accurate, the high level of illuminance may be caused by the overall size of the fascia signage comprised of lettering and logos as well as possibly the black metal cladding.

4.3 The method of illumination and its illuminance level are therefore not a cause for concerns in terms of public safety.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The internally illuminated fascia sign with its return and the projecting sign, by virtue of their size, scale, design, materials, siting and method of illumination, result in overly dominant and incongruous additions creating visual clutter which is detrimental to the appearance and character of the host building, streetscape and the conservation area, and harmful to the setting of adjacent Listed buildings.

6. Recommendation

6.1 Refuse advert consent with Warning of Prosecution Action to be Taken