

Delegated Report			Expiry Date:	10/07/2018
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Matthias Gentet			2018/2159/A	
Application Address			Application Type:	
176 Camden High Street London NW1 8QL			Advertisement Consent	
1st Signature	2nd Signature (If refusal)	Conservation	Recommendation(s):	
			Refuse Advertisement Consent	
Proposal(s)				
Display of an internally illuminated LED digital display screen (measuring 3m in height by 14.30m in width and 0.3m in depth) on the curve south facing facade above first floor windows.				

Consultations

Summary of consultation responses:

Consultation Letters were sent out on 14/05/2018 and expired on 04/06/2018.

An objection from the Owner/occupier at No74 Durdans House, Royal College Street, NW1 9RD were received, summarised as follow:

- Will turn Camden Town into a garish version of Piccadilly Circus;
- Potential eyesore and NOT in keeping with the surroundings.

Officer's Response:

See paragraphs 1.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1 to 4.8 in the below report.

Transport for London (TfL)

Transport for London (TfL) has provided the following comments:

- The site of the proposed digital display screen is on Camden High Street which forms part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). TfL is the highway authority for the TLRN, and are therefore concerned about any proposal which may affect the performance and/or safety of the TLRN.
- TfL Spatial Planning understands that a road safety audit has been carried out and there is no issues regarding public safety due to the layout of the road network and the positioning of the displayed advertisement sheet.
- The proposed advertisement must be consistent with the guidance set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) publication: "The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements" (PLG05, January 2015).
- The minimum display time for each advertisement shall be 10 seconds, the use of message sequencing for the same product is prohibited and the advertisements shall not include features/equipment which would allow interactive messages/advertisements to be displayed.
- There shall be no special effects (including noise, smell, smoke, animation, exposed cold cathode tubing, flashing, scrolling, and three dimensional, intermittent or video elements) of any kind during the time that any message is displayed.
- The interval between successive displays shall be instantaneous (0.1 seconds or less), the complete screen shall change, there shall be no visual effects (including fading, swiping or other animated transition methods) between successive displays and the display will include a mechanism to freeze the image in the event of a malfunction.
- It's understood that the advertisement sheet will be installed using a crane; a separate licence is required with TfL, please see, <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/urban-planning-and-construction/highway-licences>

TfL has **no objections** regarding the above planning application.

Site Description

The site is 2-storey corner (triangular) circa 1950 building housing the HSBC bank, located at the junction of Kentish Town Road (to the north-east) with Camden High Street (to the north-west), and adjacent to Camden Town Underground Station to the rear. It is facing onto Britannia Junction with the southern section of Camden High Street and Parkway to the south-west. The site is surrounded by commercial units at ground floor level and drinking/entertainment establishments amid a busy traffic junction.

The building sits within Camden Town Conservation Area. Although it is not listed, it is marked as being a 'positive contributor' in the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal.

Relevant History

Site History

2016/5821/A – (granted on 21/11/2016) - Display of 2 x internally illuminated lettering fascia signs and 2 x internally illuminated projecting signs;

2015/3873/A – (granted on 22/10/2015) - Display of 2x 'halo' illuminated text signs 1x non-illuminated text sign and 2x internally illuminated projecting signs;

2006/4342/A – (granted on 19/12/2006) - Display of halo illuminated lettering and logo signage to bank;

2006/1300/A – (granted on 22/06/2006) - Display of internally illuminated advertisement lettering and two projecting box signs to front elevation of building, and rooftop flag pole.

Adjacent Sites History

Camden Town Underground Station

AE9700774 – (part grant/**part refused** on 23/01/1998) - The display of non-illuminated signs on Camden High Street and Kentish Town Road frontages.

Adjacent to Camden Town Underground Station

2016/3005/A – (**refused** on 22/07/2016 and **dismissed on appeal** (ref: APP/X5210/16/3160523) on 03/02/2017) - Display of an internally illuminated LED digital display sign and mural surround.

2015/6179/A – (**refused** on 01/02/2016) - Installation of 1 x digital LED display screen (3.846m x 6.596m).

Other Sites within Camden

Royal Mail Delivery Office, 1 Barnby Street

2014/1027/A – (**refused** on 26/03/2014 and **dismissed on appeal** on 02/03/2015) - Erection of a free standing digital advertisement display unit.

St Giles Hotel, Bedford Avenue

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.

University College Hospital, 235 Euston Road

2013/6400/A – (refused on 22/10/2013 and **dismissed on appeal** on 31/12/2013) - Display of digital screen to front elevation of hospital.

2012/4564/A – (refused on 18/10/2012 and **dismissed on appeal** on 11/07/2013) - Display of digital screen and lettering to front elevation of hospital.

Finchley Road

1a New College Parade

2013/2419/A – (refused on 01/07/2013 and **dismissed on appeal** on 11/02/2014) - Display of 1x internally illuminated advertising hoarding at second floor level to side elevation replacing existing hoarding on property.

No124

2018/0553/A – (under assessment but likely to be **recommended for refusal**) - Display of an LED internally illuminated digital advertisement sign measuring 3.2m in width by 5.76m in height.

2014/3174/A – (refused on 18/07/2014) - Display of one internally illuminated fascia sign at first floor level of building.

2013/2349/A – (refused on 19/06/2013 but allowed on appeal on 10/03/2014) - The display of an internally illuminated display board to the side elevation above existing retail unit (Class A1) at first floor level

Land adj. No135

2013/8151/A – (refused on 14/02/2014 and **dismissed on appeal** on 27/06/2014) - Digital media display on a freestanding advertising display unit.

2012/0076/A – (refused on 31/05/2012 and **dismissed on appeal** on 11/01/2013) - Display of internally illuminated digital display panel on monopole.

The O2 Centre, 255

2012/1491/A – (refused on 16/05/2012 and **dismissed on appeal** on 13/12/2012) - Erection of a double sided free standing totem with digital screens.

Jewish Community Centre, No341-351

2018/0744/A – (refused on 15/05/2018) - Display of 1 x internally illuminated wall-mounted advertisement screen on south facing flank elevation.

2013/7024/A – (refused on 03/01/2014 and **dismissed on appeal** on 27/06/2014) - Installation of a free standing LED internally illuminated public information display sign.

British Telecom, 138 Maida Vale

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.

Adjacent to Whitefield Memorial Church, Tottenham Court Road

2015/1209/A – (refused and warning of prosecution 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.

On the corner of York Way and Freight lane

2014/4102/A – (refused on 18/07/2014 and **dismissed on appeal** on 08/01/2014) - Display of a free standing internally illuminated sign.

124 West End Lane

2009/2923/A – (refused on 06/10/2009) - Installation of digital LED screen (1.8m x 9.4m) at fascia level on corner of West End Lane and Blackburn Road to display advertisements (changing every 710 seconds).

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:

Land adjoining 279 Finchley Road

- **EN09/0102** – display of two advert hoardings (**Appeal against discontinuance notice dismissed** on 26/02/2013)

Central School of Speech and Drama College Crescent

- **EN07/0473** – Display of two advert hoardings, each 1 x 48 sheet (**Appeal against discontinuance notice dismissed** on 21/05/2013)

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework, 2012

The London Plan 2016

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 (Managing the impact of development)

D1 (Design)

D2 (Heritage)

D4 (Advertisements)

T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport)

Camden Planning Guidance (2018)

CPG (Advertisement)

CPG1 – Design (July 2015 updated March 2018)

CPG6 - Amenity (September 2011 updated March 2018)

Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal (4th October 2007)

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

Planning Enforcement Initiative to remove unsightly advertisement hoardings in the Borough

Assessment

1. Background

- 1.1 The digital screen is proposed to be displayed on a c1950 building that is owned by Transport for London (TfL) and forms part of the adjoining Camden Town Underground Station. It is occupied at ground floor level by the HSBC bank.
- 1.2 It must therefore be understood that, despite the reference in the Design and Access Statement of the advertising screen being displayed above the entrance to Camden Town Underground Station, the signage is in fact to be installed above the

entrance to the bank, which is facing directly onto Britannia Junction – and not onto Camden High Street or Kentish Town Road where entrances to the station are located.

- 1.3 Although the host building is not listed, it is recognised as being a ‘positive contributor’ in the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal which goes on to describe the property as being *‘a good example of post-war architecture dating from c 1950. Despite being only of two storeys, it is a strong focal building visible in long views from the south; it has a curved stone facade, incorporating high quality friezes depicting scientific and medical themes.’*

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is seeking advertisement consent for the display of an internally illuminated LED digital screen affixed on to the curved south facing façade, above the entrance to the bank and within the raised parapet area sitting above the first floor curved windows.
- 2.2 The advertisement is to measure 14.3m in width by 3m in height and 0.3m in depth (thickness) facing directly onto Britannia Junction and surrounding roads and shops. It is to be made in such a way as to *incorporate ‘The Breath’ which is an innovative environmental technology that can be used to treat and purify polluted air. The technology is comprised of a multi-layered fabric that separates and absorbs harmful airborne pollutants.*
- 2.3 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 permits the Council to only consider amenity and public safety matters in determining advertisement consent applications.

3. Assessment

- 3.1 The principle considerations in the determination of this application are:
- Visual Amenity
 - Transport and Public Safety
- 3.2 The proposed internally illuminated LED digital screen would measure approximately 14.3m in width by 3m in height and 0.30m in depth, with advertising face covering an area measuring approximately 42.9sqm. It would be framed by a very thin surround and shaped to fit the curve of the south facing façade of the building. The bottom of the sign would sit approximately 7.4m above ground level (taken from the left hand side of the sign) and approximately 7.6m above ground level (taken from the right hand side of the sign). The difference in the measure is due to the uneven pavement that is sloping towards the Kentish Town Road side of the site.
- 3.3 The advert would fit neatly within the raised parapet section on the apex elevation which creates what could be easily seen as a fascia. It is unclear whether this architectural detail was originally designed to enable the display of signage or whether it was included solely as an architectural feature. However, not having any supporting evidence of the area having been used for the display of advertisement in the past, it is to be understood that the design is purely for ‘cosmetic’ purposes only.

4. Visual Amenity

- 4.1 CPG (Advertisement) 2018 states that *'Digital advertisements are by design visual prominent—and attention grabbing with their illuminated images, especially when they are large in size. They are not suitable for locating in some areas. Factors which make a location less suitable for digital billboards include locations within conservation areas, with a uniform heritage—character, near listed buildings and where the advertisement could become the most prominent feature of the street scene.'*
- 4.2 The guidance further states that *'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. The Council will resist the illumination of hoardings where it is a nuisance or out of character with the area.'*
- 4.3 The Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal refers *the proliferation of signage, even of an—appropriate design, as being harmful to the character of the Conservation Area. Prominent—corner buildings (focal buildings in long views) acting as focal points in long views include—examples at Britannia Junction:*
- *HSBC Bank, No 176 Camden High Street in views along Camden High Street to south and Camden Road to east;*
 - *No 187 Camden High Street in views to north along Camden High Street and Kentish Town Road and to east along Camden Road;*
 - *Worlds End PH on corner of Camden High Street and Camden Road in views along Parkway to west and Kentish Town Road to north.'*
- 4.4 The chosen siting is highly prominent. It offers a full uninterrupted and unobscured visibility from the public realm across a wide area of a large and dominant LED digital screen that would dominate the opened and wide layout of Britannia Junction. The method of illumination would also contribute to the prominence of the advertising screen. The size of the LED screen would transform the upper part of the host building into an incongruous light source generated by the entire advertising face of the sign – falling just short of 50sqm in area. The proposals would be an incongruous and dominant addition which would cause harm to the character of the host building and the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area.
- 4.5 The adjacent Camden Town Underground Station is also identified in the Camden Town Conservation Area appraisal as being a positive contributor to the streetscape, along with the World's End pub opposite (south-east of the junction). Alterations to the building should therefore ensure that their integrity and architectural relevance within the urban landscape are not compromised. The hierarchy of importance needs to be respected in such way that the any of the buildings framing Britannia Junction do not become subordinate to the development.
- 4.6 Although Camden High Street has many examples of commercial signage which are generally located at ground floor level and form part of the shopfronts, with the typical internal method of illumination that does not produce the level/power of illuminance generated by LED digital signs. The majority of fascia/projecting signs are subdued – their purpose being to indicate the presence of individual businesses and not general purpose commercial bill-board style advertising.
- 4.7 Policy D4 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 clearly states that *'Advertisements and signs should be designed to be complementary to and preserve the character of the host building and local area. The size, location, materials, details and illumination of signs must be carefully considered. Interesting and unique styles of*

advertisements and signs will be considered acceptable where they are compatible with the host buildings and surrounding environment. The Council will resist advertisements where they contribute to or constitute clutter or an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area.'

- 4.8 The impact of the presence of such a fixture on the character and appearance of the Britannia Junction and wider streetscape, the conservation areas and surrounding buildings is significant and harmful. The disproportionate size and location of the proposed advert would create unacceptable visual clutter. As such, the size and scale of the proposed sign is therefore considered to represent an incongruous and discordant addition that would have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the host building, wider area and nearby conservation area, contrary to Policy A1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

5. Transport and Public Safety

- 5.1 Policy D4 of the Local Plan states that advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety, including when they distract road users because of their unusual nature.
- 5.2 The method of illumination of the proposed LED internally illuminated digital advertisement would not raise any concerns subject to conditions to control the level of illumination and movement/timings of the display, in terms of public safety and is not considered to be a distraction to the moving traffic.
- 5.3 The public safety aspect of the proposal, in terms of the method of illumination, size and the location of the LED digital sign is therefore considered acceptable.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Refuse advertisement consent.