

T: 07900 413080
DDI: 0207 692 0643
E: stuart@smplanning.com
W: www.smplanning.com

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80-83 Long Lane,
London,
EC1A 9ET

Via Planning Portal only

16 September 2019

Dear sir/madam,

DISPLAY OF BANNER AND ADVERTISEMENT SPACE

THE ELECTRIC BALLROOM, 184 CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON, NW1 8QP

Please accept this covering letter as an accompaniment to this advertisement consent application to display a commercial advertisement at The Electric Ballroom in Camden.

The Site:

The application site is located on the east side of Camden High Street, south of the junction with Buck Street and north of the Camden Town Underground Station at the junction of Kentish Town Road. The site is located within the Camden Town Conservation Area and comprises a three-storey building occupied by the Electric Ballroom nightclub which spreads over two sensitive street frontages.

The Conservation Area is divided into two sub areas of distinctly different character, a busy commercial and retail area, and, a quieter more formal residential area. The application site forms a part of the commercial sub area.

The surroundings are largely characterised by commercial uses at ground floor and drinking/entertainment establishments amid a busy and dynamic setting.

In contextualising this part of the conservation area, Camdens Conservation Area Statement states that *a key element of the distinctive character and appearance of the commercial part of the Camden Town Conservation Area is its variety and eclecticism. Given its overall*

economic dynamism its predominant 19th century commercial character has seen significant change. That change has led to significant variation in the type and level of advertisements in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

The Proposal:

This application seeks advertisement consent for a non-illuminated banner measuring 6.5 metres in height and 5.5 metres in width. The banner will screen the entirety of the building frontage from the first floor upwards and will accommodate an externally illuminated advertisement.

The banner and advertisement are intended to sponsor the ongoing events at the Ballroom and will further support local community projects including a new 'walk of fame' project which will celebrate Camden's vibrant creative heritage in the music industry with plaques stretching along Camden High Street from Chalk Farm to Mornington Crescent.

Legislative Provision:

Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) requires that local planning authorities control the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

Therefore, unless the nature of the advertisement is in itself harmful to amenity or public safety, consent should not be refused. These matters are considered further below.

Planning Policy:

National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that *"...A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts."*

Local

For the purposes of this application, the adopted development plan for the London Borough of Camden comprises the London Plan (2016), the Local Plan (2017) and Camden Planning Guidance Documents on Advertisements (2018), Design (2018) and Amenity (2018).

The development plan usefully sets out the local policy context. Camden's Planning Guidance on advertisements states that *'shroud advertisements come in a range of forms but are generally largescale and can cover the entire elevation of a building.*

Policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 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. The Council will support advertisements that preserve the character and amenity of the area; and preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas.'*

Planning Analysis:

Amenity

Firstly, in order to respond to the policy context in terms of amenity impact, it is important to understand the characteristics of the site and surroundings.

Camden's Conservation Area Statement is useful in this regard. It states...

'on the east side (of Camden High Street) is Nos 178-182, a bulky brick-built electricity generating station, the scale of which is out-of-keeping with its lower three-storey neighbours comprising the later 19th century terrace at Nos 184-190, with shops at ground floor level. No 184 is home to the Electric Ballroom, a notable music venue in Camden Town for four decades. Established as a busy Irish music club, in the 1970s it became legendary for performers such as Sid Vicious, Madness and The Clash'.

It states further that...

'Alterations and extensions in the High Street have introduced over time some diversity to the original homogeneity of design. Much of the uniformity of the surviving terraces has been lost due to additional storeys which have broken the parapet line, and mansard roofs which have altered the roof form. The replacement of original windows is widespread and some brick facades have been painted'.

In this instance, the front façade of the host building has lost original architectural features, including its windows, and its brick façade has been painted black. That distinctive colour is now synonymous with the Electric Ballroom brand, an iconic part of Camden's cultural heritage by virtue of its historic use.

The character and appearance of the immediate area is predominantly commercial and is largely dominated by the physical presence of large buildings that contribute negatively to the character of the area. This creates a large-scale, busy and dynamic environment.

The host building is of no particular architectural merit given the loss of its original architectural features. It is accepted that the proposed advertisement space is large but this deliberately screens much of the negative aspects of built development, replacing it with advertisement space more contextually appropriate in the town centre and commercially focussed location. For added context, the colour black has been specifically selected to correspond with the existing building and will not therefore be discernibly different to the current arrangement, aside from the screening of negative architectural features.

The proposed banner and advertisement space is therefore considered to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area, largely in accord with the development plan and national planning policy guidance.

Even if a degree of harm were to be identified, the public benefits of creating a banner to support the progress of the 'walk of fame' and other local community projects is considered to offset that limited harm.

Public Safety

The character and appearance of the immediate area is predominantly commercial and is traffic intense.

In this context, it is highly unlikely that an advertisement of this scale would cause harm to public safety and this inference is substantiated by the presence of other significantly sized advertisements, similarly appropriate is this commercially focussed area. No grounds therefore exist that would warrant a refusal of the application on public safety matters.

Summary & Conclusion:

The proposal is for the display of a banner and advertisement space to the front façade of the building. Both the building and the advertisement will correspond to the built fabric and surroundings.

The proposal is acceptable with regard to public safety and visual amenity and therefore accords with the principles of both national and local planning policy. It is therefore respectfully requested that consent be granted.

The application is further supported with the following plans/documents:

- Site Location Plan
- Aerial View
- Existing Elevations
- Proposed Elevations
- Existing and Proposed Visualisations

I trust the commentary above is clear but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning