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Development Management
Camden Council
Camden Town Hall Extension
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10 October 2019

SS – 17/274 - PP-08208072
BY EMAIL

Dear Sir/Madam,

DA VINCI HOUSE, 44 SAFFRON HILL, LONDON, EC1N 8FH: ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

Please find enclosed an application for consent to display one new projecting sign. The sign will be located adjacent to the entrance doors for the basement level of Da Vinci House at 44 Saffron Hill, London.

Accordingly, please find enclosed the following documents, which in addition to this letter comprise the application:

- Duly completed Advertisement Application Form;
- Proposed Projecting Sign Plans and Elevations (Dwg. No. I/SH/22 Rev B); and
- Site Location Plan.

The statutory application fee will be made separately via the planning portal upon submission of this application.

a. The Application Proposals

The application proposal seeks consent for one projecting sign to the entrance of the basement level of Da Vinci House in Saffron Hill. The sign will be located on the face of the main street frontage to Saffron Hill to direct visitors to the main entrance doors which are set back slightly in the elevation of the existing building. The basement level office use, along with the entrance doors, were previously approved by Camden (LPA re: 2017/4555/P).

The sign itself will be round (800mm dia) and constructed of aluminium with a blue gloss finish with white acrylic lettering. The lettering will be backlit by internal illumination.

Consent for an advertisement has previously been granted for a sign of the same dimensions and materials (LPA ref: 2018/2910/A). This sign was installed, but shortly thereafter damaged by a tall vehicle. Although Saffron Hill is one way and double yellow lines have been installed, vehicles frequently park on the road and/or pavement. In order to pass these stopped vehicles, traffic must mount the kerb and drive along the kerb. The issue is clearly evident to the south of Da Vinci house, where bollards have been installed in the middle of the footpath to protect glass light wells and the pavement has been clearly damaged by heavy vehicles. Opposite the site, vehicles frequently stop to access the service entrance to the building (despite road linemarkings) and as a result large vehicles frequently mount the kerb to the front of the application premises. This has been observed numerous times over the past year.

More recently, the previously consented sign has been struck a second time, and in the interests of public safety, needed to be removed immediately.

Over the past year, we have been in discussions with the Area Engineer from Camden Council (Michael Asamoah-Abrefa) regarding the installation of bollards (similar to other premises in Saffron Hill) to stop vehicles mounting the kerb at this location and protect both the sign and in the interests of public safety. While there is no objection to the bollards, other projects in the wider area have dictated the timeframe for installation to date.

As such, this application for advertisement consent is essentially the same as the previously approved application however the sign will be located 4.8 metres above the pavement, and above the existing light, to ensure that it is not struck by vehicles.

b. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Current national guidance on advertisement control is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which recognises that the control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. The NPPF clarifies (in Paragraph 67) that the display of outdoor advertisements can only be controlled in the interests of “amenity” and “public safety”, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Local Planning Policy

The Local Development Framework for Camden is comprised of the Camden Local Plan (2017), together with the Policies Map (2017), and several Supplementary Planning Documents such as the recently adopted Camden Planning Guidance: Advertisements (2018).

The Camden Policies Map (2016) identifies the site as being within the broader Central London Area and the more specifically within the Hatton Garden Area in terms of planning policy and land use. The site is also within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and an Archaeological Priority Area.

Policy **D1: Design** of the Local Plan (2017) aims to secure a high-quality design for all development that considers the local context and character of an area; and preserves and enhances any heritage assets. Materials should be sustainable and durable, and of a high quality that complements the local character. In general, the Council welcomes high quality modern design, except where there is a homogenous design, such as a Georgian Square.

Policy **D2: Heritage** further aims to protect and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets including conservation areas and listed buildings. As such, the Council ‘will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to’ such assets unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm will have a significant public benefit.

Policy **D4: Advertisements** requires advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building, particularly in respect of the form, fabric, design and scale. Advertisements that preserve the local character and preserve or enhance heritage assets will generally be supported. Council will not support proposals that contribute to a proliferation of signs or visual clutter in the public realm. Lighting should consider nearby residents and wildlife in terms of light pollution or flashing lights.

In addition to the Local Plan Policies, **Camden Planning Guidance: Advertisements (2018)** has been prepared to provide specific guidance for advertisements across the borough. The document provides specific guidance with regards to banners, shroud advertising, hoardings etc. and therefore is not applicable to this particular proposal. However, the general principles still apply to this proposal in that a sign must suit the character and design of the property, take account of the appearance of its surroundings, and consider the external fabric of the host building.

c. Assessment Against Policy

The application site is in an area characterised by larger 4-5 storey primarily modern buildings, many of which have been converted to mixed use for office and residential purposes. As such, the surrounding area is characterised by commercial uses at the ground floor and advertisements, such as the one proposed, are common in the street scene.

Location

By virtue of the size, scale and siting of the advertisement, the proposal is considered proportionate to the size and scale of this larger host building and surrounding street scene. This was also considered acceptable for the previously consented sign (LPA ref: 2018/2910/A). While projecting signs are typical in the area for other commercial spaces, the nearest sign is approximately 40 metres to the south along Saffron Hill. Therefore, although typical of the area, the proposal will not result in a proliferation of advertisements.

The front entrance to the basement is slightly recessed to the main building façade and therefore a projecting sign is needed to clearly identify the entrance and direct visitors to the commercial entrance of Da Vinci House.

A further consideration for any new sign is highway safety. In this respect, the sign is not incongruous or unduly prominent in the surrounding area. As noted already, the sign will be installed 4.8 metres above pavement level to ensure it is not struck by vehicles that frequently mount the kerb along Saffron Hill. At this height, the sign will not be a distraction or visual obstruction to drivers but will still be visible for pedestrians looking along Saffron Hill.

Overall, the location of the sign is considered acceptable and will not result in a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building or surrounding area, or compromise highway safety. As such, the proposal complies with the requirements of Policies D1 and D4.

Materials

As with the previously consented sign, it will be constructed of aluminium finished in a blue gloss and fixed to the building façade with a brushed stainless steel bracket. The white lettering will be acrylic. Although the sign will have lighting installed internally, only the white lettering will be illuminated. The level of illumination will be 120cd/sqm and will not be intermittent.

The low level of illumination is required to clearly identify the business during the early morning/evening. The proximity of the street lamp will dominate light in the area and therefore the level of illumination from the proposal is not expected to impact on the amenity of any surrounding residential premises.

As such the proposed materials and lighting are considered appropriate to the external fabric of the building and the character and design of the host building. The aluminium frame will be durable and of a high-quality material that is compatible with the modern façade of the host building. Therefore, the sign complies with the requirements of Policies D1, & CPG.

Heritage

The application site is located at the eastern edge of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy for Hatton Garden notes that there is not a consistent period or style across the Conservation Area, but part of the character of the area comes from the activities such as the historic jewellery trade. The site is located within Sub-area 5: Farringdon Road. Characteristics of particular note to Saffron Hill is the narrow street layout which has evolved from the Medieval period and the taller buildings which have been more recently developed along here, resulting in a sense high urban density and intimate street enclosure. Overall, in terms of architecture, while there is a degree of detail on some of the older buildings, the more modern post-war buildings 'lack a distinct character'.

In light of the varied character and built environment within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, the proposal for modern and discreet signage, is considered to preserve and does not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the building to which the sign will

be attached, is a modern style and thus the proposal will be in keeping with the building. The surrounding area is also characterised by office premises at street level with similar projecting signs and the proposal will not appear incongruous or out of character along Saffron Hill.

Therefore, the proposal will not result in any perceived harm to the Conservation Area, adheres to legislation under Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 and is consistent with local policy, in particular: Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan; CS14 of the Core Strategy; and DP24 and DP25 of the Local Development Policy.

d. Summary

In light of the above assessment, we are of the opinion that the proposal is an acceptable form of development particularly in light of the previously consented sign, and it will not be detrimental to the amenity or character of the area. The proposal is also considered suitable in the context of the surrounding Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

We trust that you have sufficient information to determine this application but should you have any questions or queries in the meantime or require any further information, please do not hesitate to me on 020 3640 1036 or email sscott@iceniprojects.com.

Yours sincerely,



Sandy Scott
PLANNER