

Delegated Report

Expiry Date:

09/06/2020

Case Officer

Tony Young

Application Number

2020/2466/A

Application Address

131-143 Belsize Road
London
NW6 4AD

Drawing Numbers:

See draft decision notice

PO 3/4

Area Team Signature

C&UD

Authorised Officer Signature

Proposal(s)

- a) Display of 2 double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting signs (signs 1 and 6) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 2)
b) Display of a double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting sign (sign 7) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 8)

Recommendation(s):

Part grant, part refuse consent

Application Type:

Advertisement Consent

Consultations

Consultation method:

No statutory consultation required

Summary of consultation responses:

No responses received

Site Description

The application relates to the ground floor retail unit on the south-west corner of the Abbey Co-op Community Centre and Belsize Road Car Park site, recently the subject of a phased redevelopment scheme to provide mixed commercial and residential uses.

The building isn't listed and is not located within conservation area, though it is in close proximity the Priors Road and Alexandra Road Conservation Areas. The site is bounded by railway tracks to the south, residential development to the east and west, and with a health centre and community centre immediately north.

Relevant History

Application history:

2018/1714/A - Temporary display of advertisement boards with Halo backlit lettering on existing hoarding along Belsize Road and non-illuminated advertisement boards on existing hoarding along Abbey Road until 21/03/2021 in connection with Community Investment Programme and approved redevelopment under application reference: 2012/0096/P. Grant advertisement consent dated 18/04/2018

2018/1393/A - Temporary display of non-illuminated advertisement boards on existing hoarding along Belsize Road and Abbey Road until 31/08/2019 in connection with Community Investment Programme and approved redevelopment under application reference: 2012/0096/P. Grant advertisement consent dated 21/03/2018

2015/0280/A - Display of 1x non-illuminated hoarding sign fronting Belsize Road and Abbey Road. Grant advertisement consent dated 27/01/2015

Enforcement history:

EN03/0733 – 2 x advert hoardings. Hoardings removed and breach ceased. Case closed
09/03/2005

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

The London Plan 2016

London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 - Managing the impact of development

D1 – Design

D4 - Advertisements

G1 - Delivery and location of growth

T1 - Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

CPG Advertisements (March 2018) – paragraphs 1.1 to 1.18

CPG Design (March 2019) - chapters 2 (Design excellence) and 6 (Shopfronts)

CPG Amenity (March 2018) - chapter 4 (Artificial light)

CPG Transport (March 2019) – chapters 7 (Vehicular access and crossovers) and 9 (Pedestrian and cycle movement)

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

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1 The proposal is seeking advertisement consent for the display of the following:

- x3 double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting signs (signs 1, 6 and 7 as shown on signage plan ref. P-128229-214 rev A dated 18/03/2020); and
- x2 internally illuminated fascia lettering signs (signs 2 and 8).

2. Assessment

2.1 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.

2.2 The principal considerations therefore material to the determination of this application are:

- a) visual amenity – the design and impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and wider streetscene; and on neighbouring amenity (in so far as the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 allow consideration in this regard); and
- b) transport and public safety – the impact of the proposal on highway, pedestrian and cyclist's safety.

3. Visual amenity

3.1 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) establishes that careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness and the wider context is needed in order to achieve high quality development in Camden which integrates into its surroundings.

- 3.2 Local Plan Policy D4 (Advertisements) confirms that the Council will support advertisements that preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building, but will resist advertisements that contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage and to street clutter in the public realm.
- 3.3 CPG (Design) states that *“Any signage or lettering should be uncluttered and respect the character and design of the building”* (paragraph 6.13 - Camden Planning Guidance: Design, March 2019)
- a) Display of 2 double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting signs (1 and 6) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 2)
- 3.4 The proposed display of signs 1, 2 and 6 on the main retail frontage (north and north-west elevations as shown on drawing ref. P-128229-210 rev E) are considered to be acceptable in terms of their size, design, materials, location, luminance levels and methods of illumination. While Council guidance generally discourages internally illuminated signs, in this particular instance, only individual lettering would be illuminated (the background of the signs remaining non-illuminated) and the signs would have suitably low luminance levels (no higher than 204 and 375 cd/m² respectively) typical of signage displayed at fascia level on a defined retail frontage. Signs 1, 2 and 6 would therefore preserve the character of the host building and wider streetscene, and are acceptable.
- b) Display of a double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting sign (sign 7) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 8)
- 3.5 The display of retail signage (signs 7 and 8) is considered to be unsuitable on the north-east elevation (as shown on drawing ref. P-128229-210 rev E) as it doesn't form part of the retail frontage and is read as being part of the separate residential character of the building associated with the upper floor flats.
- 3.6 CPG (Design) states that, *“Properties should only have one main fascia sign and one ancillary projecting or hanging sign per street frontage, although two projecting signs may be appropriate in cases of large shopfronts stretching across two or more shop units. Too many adverts/signs on a property contribute to visual clutter and can detract from the appearance of the street scene”* (paragraph 6.29).
- 3.7 More specifically, shopfront advertisements will generally only be acceptable at fascia level which *“refers to the signboard on the upper part of a shopfront showing the name of the shop”* (paragraph 7.87 – policy D4 (Camden Local Plan, June 2017)).
- 3.8 While the intention of the applicant (Sainsbury) to maximise the presence of the retail unit is recognised, any retail signage in this location would not only blur the edges of the Sainsbury's unit on the northern side, but would also be misleading in a visual sense for both the retail and residential units, especially as signage would extend beyond the retail frontage or shopfront itself and be displayed entirely on the residential façade of the building which has its' own separate character and treatment contrary to the above policy and guidance.
- 3.9 As such, the display of signs 7 and 8 in this location would not respect the form, design and scale of the host building, and would be unduly obtrusive and inappropriate on a prominent corner elevation of the host building that does not need to benefit from the retail presence being further advertised or enhanced.
- 3.10 Additionally, while the same type of illuminated signage is considered to be appropriate on the main retail frontage through which customers enter and exit the premises, illuminated signage displayed on a flank brick without shopfront windows or any visible retail presence would appear incongruous and out-of-place, as well as, result in an over-proliferation of signage at the site as a whole.
- 3.11 CPG (Advertisements) states that *“The type and appearance of illuminated signs should be*

sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located.” The guidance further states that, “*All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings.*” (paragraphs 1.14 and 1.8 respectively – Camden Planning Guidance: Advertisements, March 2019).

- 3.12 The illumination would not be sympathetic to the design of the building, particularly as it has a very strong presence in the streetscene, being very prominent and indeed dominant at this corner junction due to its height and distinct architectural style in contrast to its surroundings. As such, the illumination would heighten the detrimental impact of the proposed signage by making the signs even more noticeable, adding further to the appearance of visual clutter, on an elevation that is considered unsuitable for any type of retail signage, whether illuminated or non-illuminated.
- 3.13 Overall, it is therefore considered that proposed signs 7 and 8, by virtue of their siting and illumination, would be incongruous and out of keeping given the character of the locations, and would introduce visual clutter detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building and wider streetscene, contrary to policies D1 and D4.

Residential amenity

- 3.14 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) seeks to protect the amenity of Camden’s residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and by only granting permission or consent for development or alterations that would not harm the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbouring residents.
- 3.15 All proposed signage (signs 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8) would not cause any harm to neighbouring residential amenities in terms of light pollution or outlook.

4. Transport and public safety

- 4.1 Policy D4 of the Local Plan states that advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact adversely upon public safety, including where they distract road users because of their unusual nature. CPG (Transport) also seeks to ensure that there isn’t an adverse impact on the highway network, the public footway and crossover points.
- 4.2 All proposed signage (signs 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8) is not considered to be harmful to either pedestrian or vehicular traffic and would unlikely introduce any undue distraction or hazard in public safety terms. The proposals therefore raise no public safety concerns.

Other matters

- 4.3 Non-illuminated vinyl lettering signs (signs 3 and 4) displayed internally behind glazing and a non-illuminated ATM surround sign (sign 5) as shown on the submitted drawings are considered to benefit from deemed advertisement consent, as defined by Schedule 3, Part 1, Classes 12 and 5 respectively of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, and therefore do not require formal determination by the local authority in the form of an advertisement consent application.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is therefore recommended that advertisement consent be part approved/part refused:
- 5.2 a) Approve signs 1, 2 and 6.
- 5.3 b) Refuse signs 7 and 8 for the following reason:
- 5.4 The proposed advertisements (signs 7 and 8), by virtue of their siting and illumination, would be incongruous and out of keeping given the character of the locations, and would introduce visual clutter detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building and wider streetscene,

contrary to policies D1 (Design) and D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.