

# JCDecaux

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

## Out of Home Media

Angola  
Australia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Bahrain  
Belgium  
Botswana  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Cameroon  
Canada  
Chile  
China  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Croatia  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Estonia  
Eswatini  
Finland  
France  
Gabon  
Germany  
Guatemala  
Hungary  
Honduras  
India  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Ivory Coast  
Japan  
Kazakhstan  
Korea  
Latvia  
Lesotho  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Mongolia  
Mozambique  
Myanmar  
Namibia  
New Zealand  
Nicaragua  
Nigeria  
Norway  
Oman  
Panama  
Paru  
Poland  
Portugal  
Qatar  
Russia  
Saudi Arabia  
Singapore  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Tanzania  
Thailand  
The Dominican Republic  
The Netherlands  
Uganda  
Ukraine  
United Arab Emirates  
United Kingdom  
United States  
Uruguay  
Uzbekistan  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

Development Management  
Regeneration and Planning  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London WC1H 9JE

Our Ref: A01740-41

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990**  
**Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England)**  
**Regulations 2007**

Proposal: Upgrade of Advertising Displays at Existing Bus Shelters

Locations: Site A Shelter o/s 212 Camden Road NW1 9RF  
Site B Shelter o/s 142 Southampton Row WC1B 5AJ  
Site C Shelter o/s Warner House Theobald's Road WC1X 8SP  
Site D Shelter 45 Theobald's Road WC1X 8SP  
Site E Shelter o/s 80-110 New Oxford Street WC1A 1HB  
Site F Shelter o/s 77-91 New Oxford Street WC1A 1DG  
Site G Shelter o/s 58 Kilburn High Road  
Site H Shelter on Pond Street  
Site I Shelter o/s 191 Haverstock Hill  
Site J Shelter o/s 200-202 Haverstock Hill  
Site K Shelter o/s 77-79 Camden Road NW1 9EH

This letter is submitted in support of 11 applications for Advertisement Consent to update and replace advertising panels on the LB Camden bus shelter estate at the above locations.

In each case, except for Site G on Kilburn High Road where the current footpath is being widened, the advertising panels will remain in their current position and will continue to show illuminated static images but include the ability to automatically and remotely change the message being displayed.

### Application Background

JCDecaux is at the forefront of development in the outdoor medium, with extensive experience of creating some of the most inventive and striking advertising sites across the Country in road, rail, retail and airport environments. The Company's aim is to secure the best locations and to set the highest standards in build quality, design and innovation. The Company is the Council's partner to manage and maintain the Borough's network of bus shelters, the majority of which incorporate advertising displays that are either backlit paper advertisements or LCD screens.

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These applications are part of the Company's continuing effort to improve the function, design and technology applied to the Borough's transport infrastructure for the benefit of Camden residents and visitors.



Foster and Partners shelter – Grays Inn Road

The bus shelter estate covers over 100 shelters that are supplied and maintained at no cost to the Council but entirely funded by the income from the integrated advertising display unit (ADU). As part of the Company's planned programme of improvement to the estate and to keep the advertising presentation up-to-date with changing technology and modern display methods, the current applications seek consent only to change the technology used to show the advertisements at 11 of the shelter sites, not to increase the number or the size of the ADU's.

JCDecaux has pioneered the use of modern technologies in the outdoor media roadside environment and is committed to greater efficiency and sustainability across the industry. The attached applications represent the evolution of the medium, which will see the gradual updating of ADU's with the latest display technology across the Council's estate during the contract period. Approximately half the estate already comprises of LCD screens and this proposal will add a further 11 to that number.

### Planning History

The locations of the application sites are identified in Appendix A and are all shelters which are already used for the display of advertisements. Six of the sites

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feature an LCD screen on one side of the ADU and a paper backlit display on the other side. The other five shelters all feature paper backlit advertisements on both sides of the unit. The existing advertisements are all illuminated and only able to show static images regardless of the technology used. All existing advertisement displays benefit from advertising consent.

### Proposal

The proposal seeks consent to replace the ADU's at each site with double sided LCD screens targeting pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The ADU remains an integral part of the bus shelter to which it is attached and in the same existing position<sup>1</sup>.



Illustration of the proposed Foster and Partners shelter with Integral Screen

Despite the change in display technology, the screens will continue to show static images (i.e. no animated content or flashing lights will be displayed). The advertisement will change sequentially at a rate of one advert every ten seconds. The changeover between adverts will take place instantaneously in line with established best practice. The maximum luminance levels of the screen at night will not exceed 300 cd/sqm from dawn till dusk. This accords with the advice for illuminated advertisements from the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Technical Guidance Note 5 (2015). The screen will be fitted with a light sensor, which will be used to control lighting levels automatically during the day. The measure will ensure that the level of luminance is sensitive to the change in sunrise and sunset from summer to winter and environmental conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Excepting Site G which will change from parallel to right angled to the road

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The screens incorporate a failsafe system that turns the screen black in the event of a malfunction. The screens will be remotely controlled via broadband, which will mean that images can be changed without the need to visit the site. Planned maintenance of the structure and ADU's can be carried out at times to minimise disruption to the highway network.

### **Nature of Development**

The proposed ADU's will remain the same size and in the same position as the existing displays. The only difference between the existing and proposed ADU's will be the means by which the images are displayed and changed. The size of the advertisement is identical and the industry standard "six-sheet", which provides an advertising area of just under 2m<sup>2</sup>. The unit is floor mounted and stands at 2.37m tall and 1.34m wide, sitting under the glass canopy of the shelter.

The current method of presentation for the paper advertisements means that only one image is capable of being displayed at any one time. The paper advertisements are manually replaced every two weeks with a different printed image. This process is costly both in time and energy consumption and is eliminated with the use of LCD screen technology. The application of electronic technology means that the displayed images can automatically change via a secure ISDN line, therefore the need to print, recycle and regularly visit each location is removed from the process. An additional benefit of this technology is the ability to tailor a message in a seasonal or time sensitive manner. The ability to instantly display community and local messaging and in emergencies, traffic updates or security warnings to the public using the LCD screens make this a fair more efficient and sustainable method of roadside display.

The SmartScreen product incorporates Power Factor Correction (PFC) technology to maximize the efficiency of all power connections. The units are RoHS approved and completely devoid of hazardous materials making it easier to recycle at end of life in accordance with the WEEE directive (Europe) on the recycling of electrical and electronic waste.

### **Manner of Use**

The application sites are all located within busy urban settings within retail or business environments. Where the local context has a less commercial emphasis, the locality adjoins a main transport route. The presence of advertising at each of the application sites is also long established, having been used to show illuminated images for a period of four years or more. Notwithstanding this fact, five of the 11 application sites fall within the boundary of the designated conservation area (CA) and therefore the introduction of screens and the continued advertising use needs to be carefully considered<sup>2</sup>. Despite the CA designations, none of the application

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<sup>2</sup> Sites A B D E F I & J

sites are within particularly sensitive parts of the respective CA's and share a common characteristic of a heavily trafficked busy main route. As referenced in guidance, not all elements of a CA will necessarily contribute to its significance<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, if considered by the Council to be necessary to preserve local character, the advertisements that fall within the boundary of a CA can operate more restrictively than those outside.

### **Hours of Use**

The current advertisements are all internally illuminated and operate on a 24hour basis. This proposal seeks consent to display advertising only between the hours of 23:59 and 06:00. Although the shelters themselves will continue to be used and independently illuminated, the advertising screens will power down and not display any advertising material during these hours.

### **Level of Luminance**

The level of luminance of the current advertisements, expressed as candelas per square metre (Cdm<sup>2</sup>), is dictated by the consents in line with the recommendations of the Institute and Lighting Professionals (ILP) in technical report document No 5. The ILP guidance recommends a maximum level for 6 sheet displays of 600Cdm<sup>2</sup>. In line with earlier advertisement consent granted by the Council for LCD screens on the estate, the replacement advertisements will operate with a maximum nighttime luminance set at 400Cdm<sup>2</sup>. For those planned ADU's within a CA a lower level of 250Cdm<sup>2</sup> is suggested.

### **Frequency of Change**

The advertisements do not feature any flashing or intermittent lighting effect or animated content within the display. The advertising image will remain static but capable of automatic change with one image instantly replaced by another. The typical frequency for this type of display within London and other Cities is 8-10 seconds, in line with Transport for London (TfL) guidance and the conditions applied to other similar forms of sequential roadside displays.

Attached at Appendix B is a list of suggested conditions that mirror those previous imposed by the Council for LCD screens affixed to bus shelters elsewhere in the Borough, which would give effect to the above limitations on use.

## **Legislative and Policy Framework**

### **The Advertisement Regulations**

Advertisement control in England is operated through the 2007 Regulations. The Regulations state that all advertisements, other than certain exempted classes, require consent before they can be lawfully displayed<sup>4</sup>. Consent may be granted expressly by a Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State on appeal; or

<sup>3</sup> Para 207 NPPF July 2021

<sup>4</sup> Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England)

granted “deemed consent” by virtue of Regulation 6. Class 14 deemed consent relates to the continued display of an advertisement at the expiry of a period of express consent. Class 13 relates to advertising sites used continually for that purpose for ten years or longer.

Both classes would ordinarily permit the changes now being proposed in these applications, except for the introduction of the sequential change capability, which is a material alteration in the manner of display. Express consent is therefore required to make the change in manner of use.

The 2007 Regulations create a separate self-contained code that is apart from mainstream planning controls.

Regulation 3 states that;

- ‘1. A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account –*
  - a) The provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and*
  - b) any other relevant factors*
- 2. Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1) (b)-*
  - a) Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;*
  - b) Factors relevant to public safety include- the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military); whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air’*

### **National Guidance**

The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021(NPPF), sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The updated NPPF maintains the role of the planning system in supporting sustainable forms of development. Development can fulfil an economic, social and environmental objective and achieving them through sustainable means is a fundamental principle throughout the guidance.

Advertising plays an important role in a diverse and vibrant market economy by encouraging consumer confidence and spending, which contributes to sustainable economic growth. Advertising is also an essential support for business through the promotion of products and services which drives consumer spending. The use of land for advertising is therefore consistent with the aim of sustainability and its support for a viable market economy.

In respect of outdoor advertising the NPPF states that;

*“The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the*

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*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.”*

Improving the quality of the environment is also one of the fundamental principles of the framework. The physical elements of the proposal and its attachment to the shelter unit is arguably indivisible from the use, particularly in light of the provisions of s222 of the Act. The advertised shelter is a design for JCDecaux by Fosters and Partners and is a superior quality structure that sets a high standard for street furniture in the Borough, in accordance with local guidelines<sup>5</sup>. The Foster shelter is designed to include the ADU as an integral feature and review source to maintain the unit.

Section 16 of the NPPF deals with the consideration of cultural heritage assets and how to assess the impact of development on the significance of the asset. A heritage asset includes, inter alia, a Listed Building and CA designated under the relevant legislation. Significance is defined as the value of an asset because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic and can extend to its setting. Setting, in the heritage context, is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced, the extent of which is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.

The NPPF recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the preservation of the significance of a heritage asset and delivering public benefit. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be on its conservation; however, it is recognised that elements of a CA can vary greatly from those with the highest significance to and those of a lesser significance. The applications which relate to existing modern shelters within a CA are viewed accordingly as minor alteration to an existing modern intervention within the less significant parts of the CA, rather than the addition of something entirely new within a highly sensitive aspect of the CA. It is considered that any harm would be less than substantial and would not amount to an unacceptable alteration to the character of the respective CA's.

Specific guidance relating to advertising developments and the interpretation of the Regulations is contained within **Planning Practice Guidance** (“PPG”). Section 8 of the PPG on Advertisements March 2014, as amended, explains in greater detail the criteria for considering amenity issues in advertising proposals. More specifically, on the matter of scale the guidance suggests that advertisements should respect the scale of the surroundings;

*“...for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.”*

It further advises that;

*"This might mean that a large poster-boarding would be refused where it would dominate a group of listed buildings, but would be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city (where there are large buildings and main highways) where the advertisement would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site."*

On matters of Public Safety, the PPG states that:

*"All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline."*

#### **Local Policy Camden Local Plan 2017**

The Development Management policies that are relevant to the application Proposal include the following;

#### **D4 Advertisements**

The Regulations are clear on the considerations that are material to applications for advertisement consent. Council policy can be relevant where it relates to the factors identified in Regulation 3 of the 2007 Regulations but are not decisive.

This policy in the main repeats in substance the provisions of National policy guidance and the Regulations. Advertisements are required to respect the local scale and setting and be of a high quality of design. The policy affirms the Council's aim to resist advertisements that will add to clutter or impact public safety. The commentary to the policy recognises the existence of advertisements within CA's and other heritage assets and suggests care be taken in the position so as not to harm setting or character. In terms of street furniture, the commentary asserts the desire to reduce the amount of street furniture where they result in clutter or obstruction and to limit advertising on furniture. On matters of safety, the policy aim repeats the provisions of National Guidance in seeking to avoid the potential for distraction.

The Council's adopted guidance on advertising was published in March 2018. In general terms the guidance is supportive of advertisements that are located below shop fascia level and relate well to their surroundings in terms of size, scale and siting, or to the building/structure to which they are attached. The guidance refers to advertisements attached to street furniture and, similar to the policy commentary of D4, supports proposals that do not cause visual clutter or hinder the free movement of pedestrians. The guidance goes on to support the development of digital advertisements, which include LCD screens in this proposal, provided they comply with the general provisions of D4 and TfL guidance on the positioning of digital screens. Areas where digital screens are considered acceptable include main retail areas, alongside busy main roads and in areas where the scale of surrounding building are significant. Advertisements within or close to heritage

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<sup>5</sup> Street Furniture Guidance Section 4.12 and 4.13



assets need special consideration to avoid causing substantial harm to their setting or character.

The provisions in the guidance document restates the terms of the Regulations and National guidance, which the applicant considers are not offended by this current proposal. Each of application site shelters are located in areas of retail activity alongside busy main transport routes. The investment in new and innovative technology, and the raising in the standard of unit design, are supported by policy and assists it retaining the relevance and attractiveness of our city centres. The materials used in the manufacture and construction of the ADU's meets the highest quality standards and sustainability requirements, which is a core objective of the applicant. The exacting standards required in national and local policies in terms of build quality, design and sensitively to local context, are met in this Proposal.

Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and to respect the character, setting, form and scale of neighbouring buildings, its contribution to the public realm, and its impact on wider views and vistas.

### **Camden Streetscape Design Manual**

Section 3.01 relates to 'footway width'. The document states 1.8m is the minimum width permitted, however this extends to 3 metres for a busy street: -

- 'Clear footway' is not the distance from kerb to boundary wall, but the unobstructed pathway width within the footway.
- 1.8 metres = minimum width needed for two adults passing.
- 3 metres - minimum width for a busy pedestrian street, though greater widths are usually required.

In the case of the current applications, they are all existing structures on the footpath, other than Site G, and therefore the upgrade of the ADU on the same footprint as the existing display unit will not alter the existing footpath width. In any event, the existing site conditions at each location comply with the standards within this document.

### **Planning Considerations**

#### **Material Factors**

The applications are submitted under the 2007 Advertisement Regulations and relate to the display of advertisements, as such the primary considerations relate to the likely impact of the advertisement display on visual amenity and public safety, as provided by the Regulations.

Mindful of the existing advertising use at the application sites and of the provisions under the Regulations, the considerations are more narrowly defined to the impact

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of the technology change on the character and appearance of the area and on driver safety. The scale and positioning of the advertisements within the context of the application sites has already been the subject of detailed consideration by the Council and approved under the earlier consents. The consents affirm that the size of the advertisements, their positioning and orientation to the road do not offend the interests of visual amenity or public safety. The primary difference between the current and proposed advertisements relates to the change in technology used to display the images.

An assessment is required as to the impact of the technology change on the character and appearance of the various CA's. The scale of the advertisements will remain unchanged by this proposal, however the operation of the ADU's within the more sensitive environments, such as the hours of operation, the luminance levels and the frequency of change, are material and will provide the Council with far greater level of control over similar advertisements in less sensitive locations.

### **Amenity**

JCDecaux has built its reputation on delivering innovative, attractive street furniture that contributes to improving the quality of our streets to make them safer, cared for and attractive. These outcomes are embodied within the considerations of the amenity impact of development on local character, which is experienced through the land uses and buildings that form the local townscape. In the case of the 11 application sites, their character is comparable as they share a similar visual context. Many of the streets within Camden are busy, mixed use thoroughfares with a pronounced commercial presence, where large-scale commercial premises line the streets. These streets are also busy bus routes and locations where the existing advertising shelters form a recognizable part of the street scene. Not only Camden shelter but also TfL advertised shelters are a common feature of Camden streets and the six-sheet display is read as an integral part of a bus shelter design. Advertisement on roadside structures and within shopfronts is also a common feature of the commercial centers. Camden is also an important historic Borough with many unique and striking historic buildings and localities where development needs to be carefully considered, thoughtful and respectful of the historic significance.

The scale of buildings and character of application site localities are varied, ranging from substantial commercial retail and office buildings to small scale shop premises. The 11 shelters have been chosen because their impact upon the character and appearance of their surroundings would be negligible and because they already comfortably fit the local context. The ADU is an integral part of the design of the Foster shelter, which itself is an attractive piece of furniture that is unassuming in the street and compliant with the Council's guidance of street furniture. The scale of the ADU is appropriate to the pedestrian environment and will continue to be utilized to support local retail activity. The proportions of the

advertisement are at the human scale and consistent across the Borough. The application sites are confined to the busiest and most vibrant parts of Camden where the immediate local context could support this type of modern structure without harming important views or historic sensitivities.

### **Impact on the Conservation Area**

Five of the 11 application sites fall within the boundaries of CA's and all are existing advertised shelter, and therefore already include distinctly modern forms of development as part of the localities. Furthermore, all of the shelters that are subject of the applications feature illuminated advertisements that include LCD displays. Their position and immediate context make them suitable for upgrade without harm to the character or the appearance of the respective CA's. None of the CA's are defined as areas of special control over advertising, likely in recognition of the commercial nature of their surroundings. As such, advertising is not prohibited within the CA's but needs to be sympathetically positioned to ensure the size and nature of the display is compatible with its surroundings.

### **Site A o/s 212 Camden Road Camden Square CA**

The application site is an existing shelter located on the east side of the road. Camden Road, the A503, is a busy main transport route and marks the edge of the CA boundary. Properties within the CA facing Camden Road comprise substantial 3-storey Victoria semi-detached villas set back from the road. There are no Listed Buildings within the immediate locality of the application site. The shelter is located outside No 212 and is a modern Foster design featuring two six sheet illuminated advertisements, one of which is a paper display and the other an LCD screen. The surrounding area is in mixed use with a modern commercial vehicle service center on the opposite side of the road and a service station nearby. The road is well lit, so too the service station forecourt area, and heavily trafficked throughout the day.

The change in the method of display would not alter the look or the position of the shelter, which would be clearly read as an integral part of the existing structure, and not detract from the character and appearance of neighbouring buildings. The advertisement would be static, with conditions to control image display duration, level of luminance and hours of operation. These measures would ensure that the replacement ADU would not have a detrimental impact or be unduly dominant on the character and appearance of the CA, the shelter or the street.

### **Site B o/s 142 Southampton Row Bloomsbury CA**

The application is an existing shelter on the east side of the road and already featuring two six sheet illuminated displays. This part of the CA, like many streets in central London, is a busy urban context with a range of commercial premises and illuminated active street frontage. There are no Listed Buildings within the

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immediate locality of the application site. The shelter currently includes an LCD display on one side of the integral ADU, the change in the display method for the outer facing advertisement would have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of neighbouring buildings. The advertisement would be static, with conditions to control image display duration, level of luminance and hours of operation. These measures would ensure that the replacement ADU would not have a detrimental impact or be unduly dominant on the character and appearance of the CA, the shelter or the street.

Subject to the brightness of the screens being limited and hours of use controlled to respect the historic setting within which they area set, the replacement form of advertisement, compared to the existing signs, would have no greater impact upon visual amenity. The proposed advertisements would be in scale and in keeping with the character of the road and not appear out of place in their surroundings.

### **Site D o/s 45 Theobald's Street Bloomsbury CA**

The application is an existing shelter on the south side of Theobald's Street and currently features two six sheet illuminated displays, one of which is already an LCD display. Theobald's Street is a busy part of the CA and on the south side, adjoining the application site, is a terrace of three storey buildings with ground floor commercial outlets. The shop premises comprise a number of lit and modern advertised shop fronts. One of these properties is Conway Hall, a listed building that extends to the rear of the terrace. At street level the buildings have been much altered and provide the visual backdrop to the application site. In light of this context the change in the display technology at the shelter would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the CA or the neighbouring buildings.

### **Site E o/s 80-110 New Oxford Street Bloomsbury CA**

The backdrop for the application site is the five storey retail terrace of Prospect House on the north side of New Oxford Street. The existing advertised shelter is directly outside the entrance to No 100 and the street frontage comprise a run of modern commercial retail outlets. This section of the road is very busy with both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The land opposite on the south side is redeveloped with modern buildings and is twinned with the same Foster design bus shelter. Both shelters on the north and south side feature one LCD screen and one paper panel on the integral ADU's. The street activity and retailing provide the appropriate context for the shelter advertising without appearing out of place with the CA. The existing illuminated

roadside displays are part of the street and urban fabric of the CA. The immediate context of the site is not uniquely sensitive within the setting of the street. Although falling within the boundary of the CA it is considered that the change in the form of advertisement represents a sympathetic alteration that is unlikely to harm the area or the character and appearance of the CA.

## **Site I o/s 191 Haverstock Hill Belsize Park CA**

The boundary of the CA runs down the centre of Haverstock Hill, therefore the application Site I falls within the CA as it is located on the west side of the road. The site is an existing advertised Foster shelter with integral ADU's comprising illuminated six sheet paper displays. The shelter is positioned along the roadside edge of a very wide pavement area of approximately 12m separating the carriageway from the building facades. The space in between is lined with mature trees, ample pedestrian spaces, public seating, cycle parking and other items of street furniture, including the application site shelter. The retail parade is an attractive thoroughfare and although none of the buildings are listed, they provide an attractive group of retail buildings. The street is busy with pedestrians and vehicle and despite recent restrictions, the centre appears to be thriving. This setting is the immediate context of the application site, that of an active retail centre alongside a busy transport route. The existing advertised shelter is considerably distanced from the buildings and seen more within the context of the street activity and traffic movements than the architecture of the retail parade. Commercial premises are a feature of both sides of the road.

The change in the method of advertisement display would not be an inappropriate alteration to the shelter or a harmful addition to the street, given the position at the very edge of the CA. Nevertheless, the imposition of controls over the level of illumination during the hours of darkness and restrictions on the hours of display would be secured by condition to minimise any adverse impact. It is therefore considered that proposals to replace these existing advertisement panels, together with the conditions to limit the visual impact of the digital display and prevent movement, would not adversely impact the streetscene, the character and appearance of neighbouring buildings, nor the value of the wider CA locality.

### **Safety**

Considerations of public safety issues are concerned with the effect an advertisement would have on pedestrians and drivers' and whether the position of the advertisement or the manner of display is likely to be so distracting or confusing as to create a safety hazard. It is recognized that roadside advertising is intended to be seen but this does not mean that advertisements are a distraction. Advertising is often part of the fabric of commercial areas and alongside transport

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corridors where drivers have a degree of expectation of seeing commercial images and can adjust their driving accordingly. It should be recognised also that the proposal is to replace existing illuminated advertising panels that form part of the structure of the bus shelter and not introduce any additional displays. To most observers the change in technology would be indistinguishable when properly controlled through appropriate conditions.

The ADU's are prominently positioned on the public footpath to be readily visible when approaching either on foot or by vehicle. The main audience will be pedestrians although a few will also be visible to drivers. The prominence of the sites, all of which are existing elements of the street, will provide ample opportunity to people to see the simple messages on display as they pass by. The same is true for drivers, who will see the displays alongside active street frontages.

For those sites visible to vehicular traffic the approaches are along roads with a low speed limit and where there isn't a heavy burden on a driver's concentration. By the time a driver sees the application site he/she will have travelled through an overtly commercial setting and would have passed many retail premises and seen many other roadside attractions. A driver's expectation of seeing advertising imagery is therefore already very high and consequently reduces considerably any potential for a driver to become confused or distracted.

The proposed change of technology will not alter the fact that only static images will be displayed at any one time and that the lighting levels of the displays screen will be kept to the minimum necessary to illuminate the image without appearing overtly bright. The existing advertisement displays have not resulted in any harm to driver safety since installation and examples of other locations in the Borough where digital screens have replaced backlit versions indicate no change in driver behaviour or an increase in accident occurrences. It is considered, in light of the local context and existing level of activity at the application sites, that the proposed alteration in the method of display will not be against the interests of public safety.

### Summary

The proposals do not seek to add more furniture to the street, all the sites under application are existing items of street furniture. The technological change in the method of advertisement display does not fundamentally alter the type of use, only the way in which it is achieved. All development needs to be sited with sensitivity and respect for their surroundings particularly when the setting has historic significance. Respect for heritage does not however equate to a prohibition on development. Areas are subject to change and evolution and can adapt to such change without loss of character or degradation in appearance, provided development is sensitive to context and sets the highest standards of design.

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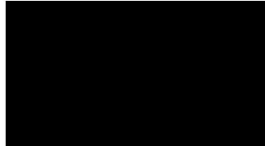
The proposed change in method of display should not cause any adverse effect on visual amenity as it will not change the scale, location or position of the existing advertisements. The advertisements form part of a modern freestanding structure and replace an existing item of the same overall size. There can be no suggestion therefore that visual clutter would result as no additional furniture is proposed. The change in the method of advertisement display would represent a relatively minor alteration to the street scene and one that would be visually neutral in impact. Independent of the evident improvement in the shelter provision, the restricted nature of the advertising use has the potential to benefit visual amenity through limiting the duration and method of display.

The advertisements are positioned close to the road and set within the footprint of a bus shelter. The ADU's are visible to passing traffic but would fall short of being unacceptably intrusive or visually harmful. They will have limited effect on residential properties within the area, which are typically confined to upper floors, rather than the street level environment which is the immediate context for the advertisements.

One of the principal objectives of Planning policy is to ensure a high quality of design, sustainable forms of development and conformity with the general principle of safeguarding amenity and public safety. Overall the proposal to upgrade the method and manner of advertisement display at the 11 locations, would accord with policy guidance and will not be against the interests of visual amenity.

Please let me know if you require any further information relating to the nature of the proposed upgrade.

Yours sincerely,



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