

Proposed Fascia Signage for Premises at 2 Joppa Road, Edinburgh

Supporting Planning Statement

Introduction

This statement sets out the planning history relevant to the current proposal and the justification for approval of the application. The application proposes the display of replacement signage on an established large retail unit located on the north side of Joppa Road in Edinburgh.

Previous Approved Signage

A fascia sign with full internal illumination was approved on the premises in 2000 (ref 00/02147/ADV) on 26th September 2000, and a replacement sign of the same dimensions was approved on 21st May 2009 (ref 09/00597/ADV). This sign was 18.5 metres long and 2.05 metres in depth, and was positioned above a lower level fascia of 1.15 metres depth.

New Proposed Signage

The new signage consists of individually illuminated letters and logo attached to a non-illuminated grey background. The lettering occupies an area of 6.95 metres in length by 1.4 metres in depth, and the logo measures 1.82 metres by 1.82 metres. Consequently the new illuminated lettering and logo only occupies a total area of some 13 square metres, compared with the previous fully illuminated fascia sign which occupied 37.9 square metres. The remaining area previously occupied by the fully illuminated sign is now taken up by plain non-illuminated fascia.

Consequently the scale of the current proposal is around one third of the size of the previous sign, and is only lit with individually illuminated lettering, instead of being fully illuminated with internal lighting. Thus the visual impact of the sign is reduced by a very substantial extent, and the grey background fascia is very subdued and blends in well with the street scene, being complementary to rather than contrasting with the external materials of the stone-built houses on either side of the premises. The height of the upper edge of the fascia remains unchanged and is in line with the eaves height of the adjacent house.

Planning Issues

Under the terms of the advertisement regulations, applications must be assessed on the basis of two issues only – public safety, and amenity.

As regards public safety, the planning officer who assessed the 2009 application stated *“Whilst the signage is illuminated, it does not contain any colours that could cause confusion to road users. It is an acceptable distance from pedestrian crossings”*. He concluded: ***“The proposal has no adverse impact on public safety”***. The current application proposes signage which has a substantially reduced scale and level of illumination compared with the 2009 signage, and consists of white lettering only. This complies with the council’s design guidance on signs and advertisements in its

approved 'Guidance for Businesses' document, which states that *"white illumination is preferable"*. As the 2009 signage was considered by the planning officer to have no adverse impact on public safety, the same conclusion should be reached for the current proposal with its much reduced scale and illumination.

As noted in the planning officer's report for the previous sign, the fascia is set back approximately 10 metres from the public road. The planning officer observed that *"the set back of the building assists in reducing not only the visual impact of the building itself but also the signage. It is relatively well screened from approaches from the east and west by the adjacent residential properties. The industrial appearance of the building also lends itself to accommodating signage of this nature to a greater degree than a building of a more residential or traditional character. In these circumstances the replacement sign has no additional effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area than the previously consented signage. **The proposal has no adverse effect on the amenity of the area**"*. The new sign which is the subject of this application has a much reduced visual effect on the area compared with the sign approved in 2009, and as such greatly enhances the appearance of the building and the surrounding area.

Policy DES13 of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan deals with shop front design, and states that *"Planning permission will be granted for alteration to shop fronts which are improvements on what already exists and relate sensitively and harmoniously to the building as a whole. Particular care will be taken over proposals for the installation of illuminated advertising panels to avoid harm to visual amenity of shopping streets or the character of historic environments"*. Although this application relates only to new signage and not to shop front alterations, it is clear that the principles of Policy DES13 are being observed and promoted, in that the proposal involves replacing a fully illuminated advertising panel with much more subtle individually illuminated letters occupying a much smaller overall area than that which was previously approved, mounted on a fascia with a subdued grey colour.

Paragraph 169 of the Local Development Plan under the heading of Policy DES13 states that, in conservation areas, *"design and materials used will be expected to be of a high standard"*. The current proposal achieves a much higher standard of design and appearance on the building than the signage which it has replaced.

Conclusions

The signage currently proposed occupies around one third of the area of signage previously approved by the council for these premises in 2009, and comprises substantially reduced illumination by the use of individually illuminated white letters rather than a fully illuminated panel. It greatly enhances the appearance of the building and the local area by observing much higher standards of design with minimal visual impact. The new signage blends into its setting and complements rather than contrasts with the adjacent buildings. The planning officer in 2009 concluded that the previous signage proposal had no adverse effect on the amenity of the area and no adverse impact on public safety, and consequently the same conclusions should be reached in respect of the much improved signage which is proposed in this application.

17th February 2019