HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

24/01981/ADV

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **24/01981/ADV** **Advert Consent**

Proposal: **External illuminated signage above main entrance.**

Location: **Unit 2 The Rowley Arts Centre Huntingdon Street**

Applicant: **Mr Alex Lowndes**

Grid Ref: **518607 260399**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application seeks permission to erect an external illuminated sign above main entrance. at Unit 2, Rowley Centre, St Neots . The sign is a wall mounted sign and lighting approximately 5.5 metres in length and 1.6 metres deep.

The site is within St Neots Conservation Area and adjacent to the listed building of 12 Huntingdon Street.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives - economic, social, and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 also sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* making effective use of land
* achieving well-designed, beautiful, and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

Applications for advertisement consent are subject to planning policy on both national and local levels. Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that "the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed". The NPPF also maintains (in accordance with Regulation 3 of the 2007 Advertisement Regulations) that advertisements should only be controlled in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. The specific wording or content of adverts is not a matter which can be considered within the determination of the application.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP14: Residential Amenity
LP17: Parking and Vehicle Movement

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014- 2029
Policy A1 - Public Realm
Policy A3 - Design
Policy RD1 - Economic Development
Policy SS1 - Town Centre Shopping

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
3.1 Place Making Principles
3.7 Building Form

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

1007974PENQ for Proposed redevelopment - EIA Screening Opinion,
REPLY dated 14.10.2011

1101319FUL for Provision of 6 screen cinema, four restaurant buildings with external seating area (A3) and 3 flats, together with car park, public plaza, and thoroughfare, cycle parking and refuse collection facilities,
GRANTED dated 04.01.2012

1301093ADV for Installation of 2 no internal illuminated fascia signs, 3 no shopfront awnings with branding, 2 no internally illuminated menu cases and 3 no branded terrace parasols. (adjacent to cinema under construction),
GRANTED dated 10.09.2013

16/00051/FUL for Installation of new kitchen extract ductwork (Retrospective),
GRANTED dated 07.03.2016

24/01980/S73 for Variation of condition 21 (Opening Hours) of 1101319FUL to allow 24 hour use of units 2 and 3 as a gym: Pending consideration.

CONSULTATIONS

CCC Highways have not responded to the application.

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received at the time of determination.

ASSESSMENT

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Design and Visual Amenity
- Public Safety

The site was a restaurant and is changing to a gym which is a permitted change of use within USE CLASS E and there are no restrictive conditions to limit this change.

Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

In this regard, the relevant policies within the local plan to 2036 (LP 11 Design Context, LP 12 Design Implementation and LP34 Impact of Heritage assets and their settings) seek to manage development that should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.
Due to the location of the site within a small retail area and the proposal including minimal changes to the external appearance HDC Conservation team have not been consulted in this instance.
Officers have however assessed the impact of the replacement advertisement on the St Neots Conservation Area and adjacent listed building. Officers consider that the advertisement proposed is in keeping with the host building and its proposed use and would not present an obtrusive addition to the local area or have a detrimental impact on the adjacent listed building or the St Neots Conservation Area. The proposal will not create undue clutter.

Overall, given the location, scale and design of the advertisement, the proposal is considered to be acceptable concerning design and visual amenities and would not be detrimental to the listed building or character and appearance of St Neots Conservation Area. It, therefore, accords with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and paragraph 141 of the NPPF (December 2024), in this regard.

Public and Highway Safety

Concerning highway safety, the relevant policies within the local plan to 2036 LP 14 (Amenity) and LP17 (Parking and Vehicle Movement) apply.

CCC Highways were consulted on the application due to its location in close proximity to Huntingdon Street and raise no objections to the proposal.

Officers have noted the comments made by highways and have reviewed the submitted plans. Officers consider that the position of the advertisement signs would not impede any form of transport including pedestrians under its proposed location. Officers have also considered if the advertisement is confusing or distracting, as to cause a hazard to or endanger, people in the vicinity. Officers consider that the level of illuminance is sufficient within its surroundings and will be secured by conditions to protect public safety.

Given the siting and design it is considered that, subject to condition, the proposal would not harm highway and public safety, therefore accords with Policies LP14 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is of:

* an appropriate scale and design;
* would not have a significantly detrimental impact on visual amenity of the area;
* would not cause harm to the adjacent listed building or St Neots Conservation Area;
* would not harm public or highway safety.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that advertisement consent be granted, subject to the imposition of conditions.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Hannah Hodges**