OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01008/ADV Advert Consent

Proposal: Changing of WH Smith signage to TG Jones.

Location: 20 - 22 Crown Street St Ives

Applicant: Miss Marina Alleyne

Grid Ref: 531353 271258

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is located in St Ives town centre and Conservation area. The shop has elevations on to both Market Hill and Crown Street.

The application seeks advertisement consent for 5 replacement fascia above the existing shop windows on 4 elevations of the building and 1 replacement hanging/projecting signs on the main shopfront and entrance. It is to change the existing WH Smith branding to the new TG Jones branding signage. The fascia signage is white projecting individual lettering on a blue painted background. The projecting sign is double sided with vinyl graphics applied to both sides as existing. The external illumination of these fascia signs is not changing and will remain as existing.

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.

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PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP14: Residential Amenity
LP17: Parking and Vehicle Movement
LP34: Heritage Assets and their settings

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) part 3.6 Landscape and Public Realm.

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CONSULTATIONS

Conservation – No comment

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways – No objections – This is a like for like replacement of the existing WH Smith signage into TG Jones. The existing signs are all at least 2.3m above the footway.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

- Visual Amenity
- Public Safety

Applications for advertisement consent are subject to planning policy on both national and local levels. Paragraph 136 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.

Visual amenity

The application site is located at the end of Market Hill in the St Ives town centre, and has its principal shopfront elevation on to Market Hill, but also has shopfront around the corner on Crown Street. The proposal seeks to replace existing signage in the same locations as they are currently, but to update the individual letters on the fascia signs and the projecting/hanging sign of the former WH Smith to the new TG Jones brand. There are no proposed alterations to the external illumination of the signs. The individual letters are of an appropriate scale and design for the fascias above the shop windows in this Conservation area setting and appear visually appropriate and in keeping the character and amenity of the site and surrounding streetscene.

The signage is therefore considered to be acceptable with regard to visual amenity and would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the site or surrounding Conservation area. The signage therefore accords with Policies LP11, LP12, LP14 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2021) in this regard.

Public safety

"Public safety" relates to any form of transport including pedestrians, and the principal consideration is to assess whether or not the advertisement is confusing or distracting, as to cause a hazard to, or endanger, people in the vicinity. Given the location (visible from a public highway), Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Team have been consulted and raise no objections to the proposals. They note the proposal is replacement signage to update the shop branding and will be at least 2.3m above the footway. It is therefore not considered that there would be any unacceptable impacts to vehicle or pedestrian safety in the vicinity. Therefore, having regard to this, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on public or Highway safety in accordance with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2021) in this regard.

Conclusion

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

*The signage is of an appropriate scale and design and would not have any adverse visual amenity impact; and
*The signage would not have a harmful impact upon public 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 appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Robyn Kerrigan**