

Section '4' - Applications recommended for REFUSAL or DISAPPROVAL OF DETAILS

Application No : 11/02712/ADV

**Ward:
Bromley Town**

Address : 2 East Street Bromley BR1 1QX

OS Grid Ref: E: 540292 N: 169394

Applicant : Vincent Chandler Ltd

Objections : NO

Description of Development:

Continued display of replacement internally illuminated fascia sign and new internally illuminated projecting sign

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Bromley Town Centre

Secondary Shopping Frontage

Proposal

The application seeks permission for 1 internally illuminated replacement fascia sign and one internally illuminated projecting sign to be located above the fascia level.

The main fascia will measure 1200mm in height, 4700 in width, and 75mm in depth. The base of the fascia will be 2400mm from ground level, made from an aluminium box with a perspex fascia, which will project from the face of the building by 150mm. The fascia will be internally lit by a maximum luminance level of 1788 candelas/m² or 5621 lumens/m².

The proposed projecting sign will be located above the fascia level, with the base of this sign being located approximately 3900mm above ground level. The projecting sign will measure 600mm by 900mm by 100mm, with a maximum projection from the face of the building of 900mm. The materials used for the projecting sign will match the materials for the fascia, being an aluminium box with a Perspex fascia. The projecting sign will also be internally lit with the same luminance levels as the fascia.

The application form associated with the application states that the fascia and sign will only be illuminated at night time, however when the application site was visited by the Planning Officer during the daytime, the signage was illuminated as can be seen from the site photographs.

Location

The application site is a mid-terrace ground floor unit located on the eastern side of East Street, close to the junction with Widmore Road, and opposite the junction with West Street. The application site falls within the Bromley Town Conservation Area. The ground floor units within the surrounding area are commercial in nature, forming the centre of Bromley Town, therefore the majority of units have some form of fascias and signage. However it can be seen that the other fascias in the area, with the exception of one unit further along East Street, are not illuminated.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby residents were notified of the application but no responses have been received to date. Any comments received prior to the meeting will be reported verbally at the Committee Meeting.

Comments from Consultees

As the application site is located within Bromley Town Conservation Area, the Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas (APCA) was consulted and the raised objection to the scheme. APCA stated that the proposal is excessive in scale and is strident, creating a sense of clutter when what is needed, especially in light of the current Bromley North Village scheme, is a more sensitive and better designer solution. The design needs to be improved if it is to comply with relevant policy and the conservation SPG. The current proposal would not preserve or enhance the conservation area for present and future generations, and is therefore not considered to be a sustainable form of development.

From an Environmental Health point of view, the application was considered and no comments were considered necessary.

From the point of view of the Highways Engineers, the signs do not affect the sightlines and the proposal is unlikely to be a distraction to drivers, therefore no objection to the proposal has been raised. Should permission be granted, a license would be required as the projecting sign appears to overhang the highway.

Planning Considerations

In terms of the impact of the proposal upon the Bromley Town Conservation Area, it was considered that the proposal is out of character. Any internally illuminated signage usually approved within conservation areas have individually illuminated letters rather than box illumination. The sign being illuminated during daylight hours (as seen during the site visit and photographs) proves that the internal illumination is insensitive to the area.

In addition, the illuminated projecting sign being located above fascia level is inappropriate. Whilst it can be seen that neighbouring properties have a similarly located projecting sign above fascia level, there does not appear to be any advert consent for these signs. Given that the Bromley North Area is going to have street improvement/public realm works carried out, it is important to make sure that any

replacement signs are sensitive to the Bromley Town Conservation Area and not detrimental to it. This sign has been designed and installed with no consideration for the Conservation Area.

As such, the view is taken that this proposal as a whole fails to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The application falls to be determined under Policies BE1, BE11 and BE21 of the Unitary Development Plan.

All other material considerations, including Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Bromley Town Conservation Area, shall also be taken into account.

Planning History

In terms of relevant planning history, a certificate of lawfulness for an existing use as an estate agent at basement and ground floor level was granted under ref. 90/01635 in 1990.

Conclusions

Members may consider that the main issues in this case are whether the internally illuminated fascia and projecting sign is harmful to the appearance of the host building and the character of the Bromley Town Conservation Area within which the property lies.

Members will be aware that Policy BE21 of the Unitary Development Plan relating to control of advertisements, hoardings and signs, states in effect that advertisements and signs should be in keeping with the scale, form and character of any buildings on which they are placed, they should have regard to the character of the surrounding area, and they should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The policy states that internally illuminated fascia signs and projecting signs will not normally be permitted within conservation areas and that signs above fascia level will be considered unacceptable unless it can be demonstrated that they make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

In this instance, whilst there are clear examples of different fascia signs and projecting signs within the streetscene, all of varying design, colour and size, only one fascia appears to be internally illuminated and this example is located much further along East Street. The fascias and signs within the immediate vicinity are non-illuminated. There are also two projecting signs above fascia level at Numbers 4 and 4a East Street, however from looking into the property history of these properties, no advertisement consent is apparent. As such, Members may consider that these projecting signs should not be used as examples of similar development that would warrant further inappropriate development as they are in position without permission. As such, Members may consider that the development relating to the current application is therefore out of context of the streetscene and detrimental to the character of the conservation area.

Advertisements and signs are considered to be an important part of the streetscene, especially in commercial areas, and they can help to make an attractive contribution to the appearance of shopping areas. The projection of the fascia sign is excessive in depth in relation to the front elevation of the host building, adding to the impact that it has upon the character of the host building. Members may therefore consider that the current proposal leads to visual intrusion and clutter within the streetscene which is unacceptable.

Given that the surrounding area is close to the Bromley North Area which is to be subject to a street improvement scheme and works to the public realm, Members will need to closely assess the application in order to ensure that it will not compromise the future quality of the area and the aims of the improvement scheme. Whilst there are examples of insensitively designed fascias in the area, these are historic signs that have been present for a number of years and are outside of advertisement control, as such they should not be used as a barometer for the design of any new signage in the area. In addition the high-level projecting signs that are in position are not internally illuminated, therefore the projecting sign which forms part of the current application may be considered more detrimental and obtrusive upon the Bromley Town Conservation Area than the existing historical signs. As new applications such as the current one are submitted, they should be assessed on their own merit and in relation to the impact that they have upon the conservation area.

Any replacement signs must be sensitive to the Bromley Town Conservation Area rather than detrimental to it, and Members may consider that at present, the current proposal has been installed with no consideration for the conservation area, and as such fails to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 11/02712, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

- 1 The internally illuminated fascia and projecting sign causes harm to the character and appearance of the Bromley Town Conservation Area, neither enhancing nor preserving the area, contrary to Policies BE1 and BE11 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 2 By reason of the depth of the fascia and internal illumination, the scheme presents an overdominant appearance in the area generally and in relation to the neighbouring premises in particular, contrary to Policies BE1, BE11 and BE21 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 3 The projecting box sign, by reason of its siting above fascia level, is detrimental to the visual amenities of the area and contrary to Policies BE1, BE11 and BE21 of the Unitary Development Plan.

Further recommendation:

Advertisement proceedings authorised to secure the removal of the unauthorised signage.

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