

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

Application No : 17/03239/ADV

Ward:
Bromley Town

Address : Land Fronting 125 - 127 High Street
Bromley

OS Grid Ref: E: 540268 N: 169148

Applicant : Mrs Amanda Cole

Objections : NO

Description of Development:

Freestanding internally illuminated double sided digital display (advertising) unit.

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Bromley Town Centre
Areas of Archeological Significance
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Bromley Town Centre Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
Smoke Control SCA 5

Proposal

Please note that there are currently four similar applications within Bromley Town Centre being considered by Members at Planning Sub Committee on the 31st August 2017 under refs: 17/03220/ADV, 17/03229/ADV and 17/03241/ADV.

This application seeks the installation of a freestanding advertising structure (internally illuminated digital display unit) on the public footway outside No 125-127 High Street Bromley, which is within the Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area.

The proposed sign will be 2.93m high x 1.34m wide and 0.26m deep and internally illuminated to a maximum of 2,500 candelas per metre squared (cd/m²) auto adjust to ambient levels; 400cd/m² at night time. The proposed materials include steel, aluminium and toughened glass and the illumination will be static. The freestanding sign will be a double forum structure featuring a digital 84" screen on both sides. The units are referred to as 'Forum CIP Units', CIP meaning Community Information Panel. Community information is shown one side and commercial advertising on the reverse. The digital screen is capable of displaying illuminated moving images and content is supplied via secure remote connection.

The application form advises that JC Decaux was awarded Bromley Council's advertising concession (December 2016) and the proposed installation of the digital asset follows consultation with Bromley Council. JC Decaux advise they understand the Council's duty to reduce visual clutter and preserve existing Conservation Areas. In support of this JC Decaux advise they have significantly reduced the initial number of planned installations within the pedestrianised zone from 11 free standing CIPs to 4. They state that all 4 CIPs will offer the public realm benefit of access to high quality, versatile advertising space to deliver Council messaging at no cost to the Council.

The submission also advises that JC Decaux had further consultation to ensure that the introduction of the proposed new technology is considerate to the planned improvement

works and that none of the proposed locations conflict with any new feature such as replacement benches, planters and/or pavilion canopies and that no entrances to any individual shops will be obscured. It advises that consultation has also taken place to ensure that pedestrian movement channels will be unaffected.

This application is one of four of proposed sign applications.

Consultations

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and any representations received following the writing of this report will be verbally reported to Members at Committee.

Concerns were raised by elected Ward Members in that the council are in the process of investing in decluttering and improving the public realm in this area with work starting in the next few weeks. Concerns are raised in that this is not an appropriate area for an advertising board and it would be out of keeping with the area.

From a heritage and urban design point of view the panel is considered as visual clutter within the conservation area which would neither preserve nor enhance the area as required by the Act. No public benefit is offered to counter this harm as per NPPF para 134 and therefore recommend that the proposal is resisted.

Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas, (APCA) consider the proposal to constitute unnecessary street clutter to the detriment to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Town Centre Planning Team advise the following:

The proposal will not physically conflict with the proposed High Street improvements due to commence in September 2017. However, the objectives of the improvements have always included the removal of street clutter and improving visual and pedestrian permeability. The introduction of this advertisement board will be additional street clutter and visually intrusive to views north and south in the High Street. I therefore consider that the proposal is harmful to the High Street and the proposed improvements and recommend that the application be refused.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the NPPF, the London Plan and the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

BE1 Design of New Development
BE11 Conservation Areas
BE21 Advertisements, Hoardings and Signs
T18 Road Safety

The Council's adopted SPG guidance is also a consideration.

The Council is preparing a Local Plan. The submission of the Draft Local Plan was made to Secretary of State on 11th August 2017. These documents are a material consideration. The weight attached to the draft policies increases as the Local Plan process advances

Draft Local Plan Policy

Policy 37 General Design of Development
Policy 102 Advertisements
Policy 32 Road Safety

London Plan (2016)

Policy 7.4 London Plan

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the conservation area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties and on highway safety.

BE1 requires a high standard of design for all development proposals and expects that development should not detract from the street scene.

Policy BE11 includes that in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, a proposal for new development will be expected to respect or complement the layout, scale, form and materials of existing buildings and spaces.

Policy BE21 amongst other matters advises that signs should have regard to the character of the surrounding area and not be likely to create a hazard to road users. That street advertising should be in scale and character with the street scene and area and should not be over prominent or appear as an obtrusive feature.

Policy T18 seeks to ensure that road safety is not compromised.

As noted, the applicants, JC Decaux, were awarded Bromley Council's advertising concession (December 2016). As part of this a number of structures were recently granted consent to the southern part of Bromley High Street. It is noted that these were replacement structures and fall outside of the pedestrianised and conservation area of the High Street.

It is understood that the Bromley Town Centre improvement scheme made a significant multi-million pound investment in the area with further improvements in the pipeline. Part of the improvements sought to actively declutter the street scene and at present there are no advertisement boards in this part of the High Street. It is considered that the introduction of the proposed structure would have a substantial negative impact leading to visual intrusion and clutter within this designated area and which would ultimately detract from and neither preserve nor enhance the character of the Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area.

Supporting information suggests that the display units will offer the public realm benefit of access to high quality, versatile advertising space to deliver Council messaging at no cost to the Council. A need for such space has not been evidenced and it is not considered that the proposal will offer such public benefit sufficient to counter the harm caused.

In terms of Highways matters a vehicle emergency path will need to be maintained. Specific Highways comments in respect of highway safety will be reported verbally to Committee.

Having had regard to the above it is considered that the proposed display unit will appear as an over-prominent and obtrusive feature and constitutes unnecessary street clutter to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the file ref: 17/03239/ADV set out in the sections above, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: APPLICATION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

- 1 The proposed freestanding internally illuminated digital display unit at this location would be an over-prominent, obtrusive and detrimental feature in the streetscene and detract from the character of the conservation area contrary to Policy BE21 of Bromley's Unitary Development Plan, SPG and Policy 7.4 of the London Plan.**