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| Planning Committee Report | |
| Planning Ref: | ADV/2019/2729 |
| Site: | The Old Fire Station, Hales Street |
| Ward: | St Michaels |
| Proposal: | Display of signage |
| Case Officer: | Anne Lynch |

SUMMARY

The application proposes display of signage to the front of the Old Fire Station in association with a change of use to a restaurant that is the subject of a separate planning application.

BACKGROUND

The main building has planning permission for a mixed use comprising restaurant facilities, bar and training facility. An application for change of use of part of the ground floor to a restaurant (A3) is under separate consideration. This application for signage incorporates design revisions following advice from officers.

KEY FACTS

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| Reason for report to committee: | The premises are owned by an Elected Member, Councillor Rois Ali |
| Current use of site: | Mixed use of the building |
| Proposed use of site: | Restaurant (A3) in part of the ground floor |
| Signage | Sign one – 1.6 metres x 0.46 metres Sign two – 1 x logo 0.38 metres by 0.38 metres and 3 x characters 0.39 metres by 0.35 metres |

RECOMMENDATION

Planning committee are recommended to grant advertisement consent subject to conditions.

REASON FOR DECISION

- The proposal is acceptable in principle.
- The proposal will not adversely impact upon public safety or amenity.
- The proposal accords with Policies: DS3, DE1 and HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016, Policies CC1, CC2, CC3 and CC13 of the City Centre Area Action Plan, together with the aims of the NPPF.

BACKGROUND

APPLICATION PROPOSAL

The application seeks advertisement consent to display advertisements to the front elevation of the property. A change of use of part of the ground floor of the building is the subject of a separate application and report to Planning Committee. This incorporates three sections of the ground floor of the building and comprises the front central entrance feature and the two archways to the right of the entrance. The entrance itself is a fixed feature and the main shop fronts of the building are glazed areas within the archway features. This application seeks to display advertisements to the upper sections of two of the archway sections.

A previous application for signage was submitted which was considered unacceptable as it proposed to infill the upper glazing. This revision proposes signage attached to the frames. Sign one will comprise an aluminium panel attached to fenestration frame which will be 1.6 metres by 0.46 metres. The advert will contain white face lit Chinese characters and lettering with rose gold plastic backing. The characters will be 0.18 metres by 0.195 metres. The lettering below will be 0.45 metres by 0.95 metres. The second sign will be rose gold plastic logo and Chinese characters with white LED back lighting. The logo dimensions will be 0.38 metres by 0.38 metres and the Chinese characters will be 0.39 metres by 0.35 metres

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site forms part of the ground floor of the Old Fire Station which is a locally listed building, built towards the end of the 19th century. The building was converted to a mixed use premises following planning permission in 2005. The building has a central door with three arches to either side which were previously the fire engine access points. The area to the left of the entrance has been converted to a gelato café in the area of the main building and the extension to the end. The area behind the central entrance and the two arches to the right are vacant and form the area proposed for the restaurant and associated signage. The arch to the end forms part of a shisha bar/lounge. Both the shisha bar and gelato café have been converted without planning permission. Both are displaying signage which does not appear to benefit from advertisement consent.

The Old Fire Station is located on Hales Street and close to its junction with Trinity Street and Fairfax Street. Pool Meadow Bus Station is to the east and south with the shopping area of Trinity Street beyond. To the west is Millennium Place and the Coventry Motor Museum. Lady Herbert's Gardens and remnants of a City Gate and Wall are to the north and within a designated Conservation Area.

Immediately to the rear of the site there is a service yard which is shared with traders at the bus station. The building has a tower to the rear elevation facing the service station. This is a key ornate feature to the building. The front elevation comprises three engine entrances on either side of the central entrance (which is likely to be fixed as part of the change of use proposal) to the building and a two storey entrance to the end. The building adjoins a café and other commercial uses around the bus station to the other side towards Trinity Street.

PLANNING HISTORY

There have been a number of historic planning applications on this site; the following are the most recent/relevant:

| Application Number | Description of Development | Decision and Date |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 51457 | Change of use from former Fire Station to restaurant, bars, hot food takeaway and college of Further Education. Internal and external alterations including to existing vehicular access and formation of new pedestrian access. Extensions to side, rear and roof and construction of tower and terraces. Closure of Highway to facilitate Development. | 9 th March 2005 |
| FUL/2019/3161 | Change of use of part of ground floor to restaurant and Installation of outdoor extraction system to kitchen; outdoor ventilation systems to restaurant; outdoor air conditioning units & cold room condensers | Separate application also being presented to Planning Committee |

POLICY

National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. The NPPF increases the focus on achieving high quality design and states that it is "fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve".

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) adds further context to the NPPF and it is intended that the two documents are read together.

Local Policy Guidance

The current local policy is provided within the Coventry Local Plan 2016, which was adopted by Coventry City Council on 6th December 2017. Relevant policy relating to this application is:

Policy DS3: Sustainable Development Policy

Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design

Policy HE2: Conservation and Heritage Assets

City Centre Area Action Plan:

Policy CC1: Coventry City Centre Development Strategy

Policy CC2: Enhancement of heritage assets

Policy CC3: Building Design

Policy CC13: Cathedrals and Cultural Area

Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Documents (SPG/ SPD):

SPD Delivering a More Sustainable City

SPG - Outdoor poster advertisement in the City

CONSULTATION

No objections from Urban Design.

A site notice was posted on 11th February 2020.

No representations have been received.

APPRAISAL

The main issues in determining this application are amenity and public safety.

Impact on visual amenity and heritage assets

The site is located within the Cathedrals and Cultural Area as set out in the City Centre Area Action Plan.

Policy DE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure high quality design and development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 127 states that “Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The NPPF further states (at paragraph 130) “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion,

as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).”

Local Plan Policy HE2 reflects NPPF policy and states that development proposals involving heritage assets in general and listed buildings in particular, should acknowledge the significance of the existing building and the area by means of their siting, massing, form, scale, materials and detail. This is also reflected in Policies CC2 and CC13 of the Area Action Plan.

Supplementary Planning Guidance for outdoor advertisements further adds that proposed displays, which, in themselves, create visual clutter by reason of the number of panels proposed, or which would create clutter by reason of addition to existing displays, will not normally be acceptable.

Initial proposals were for advertisements which filled the upper semi-circle above the doors, within the archway features. Officers raised concern about the design and suggested that it should be more in keeping with the advertisements displayed at the adjacent gelato café. The revisions submitted reflect this advice and now propose advertisements that attach to the framework of the upper window, rather than infilling this section. The scale is in keeping with the adjacent signage and appropriate for this building and the proposals are considered acceptable in terms of visual amenity.

Public safety

The NPPF states that in assessing an advertisements' public safety impact, the consideration must be whether the advertisement itself or the location proposed creates a hazard to, or endangers, people in the vicinity who are taking reasonable care of their own or other's safety.

The advertisements will be high level where they will not impact on any pedestrian footpath or access. The proposals are not therefore considered to have any impact on public safety.

Equality Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

Conclusion

The proposed advertisements are not considered to be harmful to amenity or public safety and the application is therefore recommended for approval subject to relevant conditions. The reason for Coventry City Council granting planning permission is because the development is in accordance with: Policies DE1 and HE2 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016, Policies CC2 and CC13 of the City Centre Area Action Plan together with the aims of the NPPF.

CONDITIONS:/REASON

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Location Plan
Proposed Front Elevations Dwg:02 Rev B
Proposed Sections AA & BB Dwg: 04 Rev A

Reason: *For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning*

2. The intensity of illumination emitted from the signs shall not exceed the maximum illumination standards as outlined within the Institution of Lighting Engineers Technical Report No.5 (as amended) and the signs shall not be illuminated by intermittent or flashing lighting.

Reason: *In the interests of amenity and public safety in accordance with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 and the aims and objectives of the NPPF 2019.*