

Recommendation Report for Consent to Display an Advertisement(s)

REF NO: LU/201/25/A

LOCATION: Pavement o/s 63 High Street
Littlehampton
BN17 5EJ

PROPOSAL: 2 No 1.905m internally illuminated LCD display screens, one on each side of the Streethub Unit.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	This application seeks to install 2 No. internally illuminated LCD display screens measuring approx. 1.905m (from corner to corner) on either side of a BT Streethub Unit that measures approx. 2.96m in height, 1.24m in width, and 0.35m in depth.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site resides within the Littlehampton High Street that runs east to west and is met by shopfronts to the ground floor of two-storey terraces on both the north and south sides. The sign sits within a gap between street furniture with a signpost and benches approx. 10m and 14m to the east and additional benches approx. 15m to the west. The site resides within a distinctly commercial space and serves primarily as a footpath for the space.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The area is distinctly commercial in nature, being located within the High Street and primary retail centre of Littlehampton. Surrounding uses and many upper-floor units are often residential, but the predominantly commercial development within the immediate surroundings informs the primary character of the site's locality.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

LU/200/25/PL	Removal of associated existing BT payphone(s) and kiosks and installation of 1 No BT Streethub Unit. This application affects the setting of listed buildings and is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.
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lu/25/25/pl	Installation of 1 No. new communications kiosk with integrated defibrillator and advertising display. This application is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.
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Refused
04-04-25

Appeal: Dismissed
22-09-25

lu/26/25/a	Installation of 1 No. illuminated advertising display within communications kiosk with integrated defibrillator.	Refused 02-04-25 Appeal: Dismissed 22-09-25
LU/178/25/PL	Installation of 1 No. new communications kiosk with integrated defibrillator and advertising display. This application is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.	Refused 06-10-25
LU/179/25/A	Installation of 1 No. new communications kiosk with integrated defibrillator and illuminated advertising display.	Refused 06-10-25

LU/200/25/PL - This application is for full planning permission for the same proposal as this application, but notably includes the removal of 2 No. BT phone boxes adjacent to the site.

LU/25/25/PL & LU/26/25/A - These applications sought planning permission and advertisement consent for a similar style of advertisement board, alongside a narrow, attached booth with defibrillator. The proposals were refused on grounds of visual amenity and visual clutter, and they were subsequently dismissed on appeal. These proposals were a approx. 60m to the west of the current proposal.

LU/178/25/PL & LU/179/25/A - These applications sought planning permission and advertisement consent for the same type of development as LU/25/25/PL & LU/26/25/A, but this was located immediately adjacent and east of the current proposal. These applications were also refused on grounds of visual amenity and visual clutter.

REPRESENTATIONS

Littlehampton Town Council - Objection:

- Would have a negative visual impact on the street scene and detract from the newly regenerated High Street.
- It's position would also significantly impact accessibility and disturb activities such as the weekly market and events.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Noted.

CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

Conservation Officer:

- The impact of the proposed development would result in no harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets, and therefore, would not harm their significance.

Environmental Health - No objection.

WSCC Highways (LHA):

- The proposed location is not anticipated to result in an obstruction to pedestrians nor to vehicular visibility for vehicles due to the pedestrianised nature of High Street.
- The proposed advertisements will not contain moving images and changes between the advertisements will be instantaneous with no animated transitions.
- The applicant is willing to accept a condition limiting the proposals luminance to 600 cd/m² during hours of darkness. However, Table 10.4 of the Institute of Lighting Engineers' Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 (2023) specifies a maximum of 300 cd/m² for advertisements in an E4 environmental zone.
- The LHA would not raise any highway safety concerns, but would request that the applicant reduce the proposed luminance level within the hours of darkness to accord with the relevant guidance.
- The Statutory Undertaker will need to submit the necessary notification to the Highway Authority independently and any traffic management will need to be agreed with WSCC Highways prior to works taking place.
- Do not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network.
- Conditions requested.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Comments noted.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Built-up Area Boundary.

Town Centre Retail Boundary.

Economic Growth Area.

Adjacent to Locally-Listed Buildings of Character (Non-Designated Heritage Assets).

Adjacent to Grade II Listed Buildings (Designated Heritage Assets).

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND**

Regulation 3(1)(a)(b), 3(2)(a)(b) and 4(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 states:-

"3(1) A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account -

(a) The provision of the development plan, so far as they are material; and

(b) Any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b) -

(a) Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;

(b) Factors relevant to public safety include -

(i) The safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

(ii) Whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign, railway sign or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) Whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device

used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

4(3) In determining an application for consent for the display of advertisements, the local planning authority may have regard to any material change in circumstances likely to occur within the period for which the consent is requested.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Appeal Decision APP/C3810/W/25/3366490 was for a similar form of advertisement development located approx. 60m to the west within the High Street in a similar context. The appeal was dismissed, upholding reasons for refusal pertaining to harm to the character of the area and visual amenity.

There are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

DESIGN AND VISUAL AMENITY

Paragraph 141 of NPPF (2024) states that 'the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient, and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'

The LCD screens are 0.95m wide and 1.67m high and would be attached to either side of the BT Streethub unit, with the screens facing east and west along High Street. They are to be internally illuminated and the applicant has stated that they would accept conditions preventing moving images, requiring 'instant' transitions between advertisements, that no advertisements can take place for less than 10 seconds, and that the illuminance shall not exceed 600cd/m² between dusk and dawn.

The screens would have an in-built sensor that would adapt the illuminance levels to respond to the ambient light of the environment. The proposed maximum and minimum illuminance levels would be 5000cd/m² and 600cd/m², respectively. The night-time illuminance levels proposed do not conform to the recommended illuminance levels for a >5sqm advertisement within an E4 Environmental Zone (Urban, high district brightness; such as town centres) as outlined within Tables 10.1 and 10.4 of The Institute of Lighting Engineers' Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 "The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays" (2023). As such, the proposed illuminance levels at night are too high and had this proposal been successful, a condition would likely have been sought to restrict night-time illuminance levels to a maximum of 300cd/m². However, the general illumination and scale of the advertisements are harmful in themselves and no such condition would abate these harms.

The adverts and its associated hub would be situated within the High Street, an area with a predominantly retail character and adjacent to shopfronts, hoardings, would be read alongside other in-window advertisements, and within longer views, amongst smaller A-boards found along the street. However, the High Street has notably minimal prominent signage, with all advertisements primarily being located within/on shopfronts at either side of the street. Notably, there are also minimal illuminated advertisements within the vicinity. The location is not suitable for a large, prominent, bright, and changing advertisement screen as this would be incongruous with the established character of the High Street and harm the overall character of the High Street. It would catch the eye and be a visually jarring form of advertisement amongst advertisements within the vicinity that are, in contrast, traditional, and non-illuminated.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would be at odds with the prevailing character of the vicinity

and would result in demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the street scene. It is, therefore, contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF.

SAFETY

In terms of public safety, it has to be considered whether the display screen itself or its location is likely to be so distracting or so confusing, that it creates a hazard, or endangers people in the vicinity who are taking reasonable care for their own, or others, safety. Due to the position and design the display, and the pedestrianised nature of the High Street, it is unlikely to cause public safety issues e.g., by distracting drivers or restricting visibility. However, the proposals would be visible from the road to the east, and the night-time illuminance levels are greater than those recommended by the relevant ILP guidance. As a standalone, illuminated screen, this may catch drivers attention unnecessarily in hours of darkness, and as such, had the proposal been found acceptable, a condition would likely have been sought to restrict the night-time illuminance levels to 300cd/m². Subject to this restriction, the Local Planning Authority would have been satisfied within night-time illuminance levels in terms of public safety. It is noted that WSCC Highways raised no objection but did also outline the non-compliant night-time illuminance levels as a point of concern.

Subject to the above-mentioned restriction, the adverts, by virtue of their location and size would not have had an adverse impact of the safety of pedestrians or road users.

SUMMARY

By virtue of its scale, siting, and that it they are illuminated, the advertisements would detract from, and harm, the established character and appearance of the street scene, and is therefore, contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Council in making a decision, should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been specifically given to Article 8 (Right to respect private and family life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered that the recommendation for refusal of permission in this case interferes with applicant's right to respect for their private and family life and their home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of neighbours). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for refusal is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

- 1 By virtue of its scale, siting, and that they are illuminated, the advertisements would represent a prominent and incongruous form of advertisement that detracts from, and harms, the established character and appearance of the street scene, and is therefore, contrary to Paragraph 141 of the NPPF.