



Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220912

Location: Mieszko Food City (Watford) Ltd 51 - 53 High Street Gravesend Kent

Description: **REVISED DESCRIPTION**
Application for consent for retention of externally illuminated projecting sign.

Applicant: Bala Kumar, Mieszko Supermarkets LTD

Site Visit Date: 9 September 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. A101 Rev. B – Retrospective Planning for Projecting Sign.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20160185	Display of 1 no. non illuminated aluminium composite board and vinyl fascia sign and 1 no. no-illuminated double sided projected hanging sign.	Withdrawn	12.04.2016
20200806	Application for consent display advertisement shop front signage, directional signage made from aluminium, powder coated and non illuminated.	Withdrawn	10.09.2021

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS05 - Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area
- CS08 - Retail, Leisure and the Hierarchy of Centres
- CS11 - Transport
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- S3 – Primary Shopping Frontage
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC8 – Advertisement Consent

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and

Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines (SPG3, adopted November 1996 - amended April 2020);
- High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)
- Management Plan – Gravesend's Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009)
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Informal Guidance

- Shopfront design sheets 1-6 (2020)
- The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (Professional Lighting Guide 05) (2014)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection (Regulatory Services)

Agree that a condition regarding luminance levels should be attached.

KCC Public Rights of Way

Having studied the details I believe it will not materially affect the Public Right of Way. As such I have no comments to make.

Neighbouring properties

16 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notices – the overall consultation expiry date was 30 September 2022 - no comments received.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of a three storey building in use as a shop (European food supermarket). The site is located in the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area and is within the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area.

Relevant Background

A projecting sign has been in place for some time now at the premises without the benefit of Advertisement Consent. The bracket and external lighting have remained the same since being installed at some point before 2016, it is just the advert which has changed when a new business moves in. In 2016 an application was submitted (ref. 20160185) for a new fascia sign and projecting sign. With regards the projecting sign it was not proposed to change the bracket or external lighting which already existed, it was just proposed to replace the existing sign which stated 'Terry's Off Licence' with a new sign which read 'Debra Charity Furniture & Electrical'. This application was withdrawn as officers advised the applicant that consent was not required to change the wording of the advert. However, it was missed that the existing projecting sign

did not actually have consent at all in the first place and so Advertisement Consent was required for retention of the projecting sign with a new advert. In 2020 another application was submitted (ref. 20200806) for a new fascia and projecting sign for 'Mieszko Polish Supermarket'. The application was made deficient when it was submitted due to insufficient information and as sufficient information was never submitted, the application was never made valid and was subsequently withdrawn by the Council. The applicant was advised that Advertisement Consent was required for the projecting sign as it does not have the benefit of it and Planning Enforcement have been pursuing an application since then (the fascia sign does not need advertisement consent due to it not being illuminated). When originally submitted the description did not accurately reflect that this application is for retention of the existing projecting sign and so the case officer asked the agent for their agreement to revised the description which the agent agreed to.

The proposal is therefore for retention of the existing externally illuminated projecting sign. It has a main bracket fixed to the wall, external downlights which are all in a grey colour and a hanging sign which reads 'Mieszko European Food Supermarket' with a logo above and is mainly red in colour with white lettering. The sign is located just above the fascia sign on the right hand side of the front elevation and measures 900mm in width and 650mm in height. From pavement level to the bottom of the sign is a distance of 4.4m.

The principle considerations in the assessment of this Advertisement Consent application are:

- Amenity; and
- Public Safety.

At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) recognises that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, and reinforces that the principal considerations should be amenity and public safety (paragraph 136). At a local level saved Policy TC8 (LPFR) requires applications to be examined in the light of the Borough Council's adopted policy guidelines for advertisement control and states that displays which are detrimental to public safety or amenity will be resisted. In respect of Conservation Areas, Policy CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) support proposals which preserve and, where appropriate enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets.

The Borough Council's adopted Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines (November 1996) divides the Borough into different areas, and it is reasonable to conclude that the application site falls within the Gravesend Town Centre Shopping Area. The guidelines recognise that advertisement displays can add to the appearance of Gravesend as a lively and prosperous shopping centre and accordingly the level of advertisement display acceptable in the town centre shopping area will be higher than elsewhere in the borough. Through Policy 1 it is stated that advertisements including illuminated advertisements will generally be acceptable on business premises in the town centre shopping area however, the Council will wish to see that displays are well designed and attractive. The site is also located in a Conservation Area and in this respect Policy 5 states that in or adjoining conservation areas the protection of amenity will be the paramount consideration. Advertisements should harmonise with the architectural features of any building on which they are displayed and not otherwise detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Amenity

The southern end of the High Street which forms part of the primary shopping area of Gravesend Town Centre has a varied selection of advertising for each of the businesses. Being located in the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area the advertising is in the main of a more subtle and sympathetic appearance than those found on businesses in New Road for example, which is outside of the Conservation Area. A number of the premises in the High Street have projecting signs which vary in style, appearance and materials. The most sympathetic are the traditional swing signs hung from a decorative wrought iron bracket which Design Sheet 5 advises is the most appropriate option.

In this case the projecting sign subject of this application consists of a modern style bracket with two downlighters and a metal sign providing the advertisement for the business. Whilst not as sympathetic as a

traditionally designed projecting sign, the advertisement board is of small size and slim proportions. The bracket is modern looking and fairly chunky but the downlighters are of fairly simple modern design and with the light pointing downwards is a more sympathetic way of illuminating rather than the whole sign being internally illuminated for example. The bracket and downlighters are painted the same colour (grey) as are the edges of the sign; the advert on the sign matches the writing and graphics on the main fascia sign which adds to the cohesiveness of the overall design. Overall, although not as sympathetic as a traditionally design projecting sign, it is considered on balance that the projecting sign is acceptable in terms of visual amenity and would preserve the character and appearance of the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area.

In respect of the illumination of the sign, it does not appear that there are any residential flats above the premises. There may be some above the adjacent premises at no. 54 High Street although again this is not confirmed. Reference is made to The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (Professional Lighting Guide 05) which states that in the urban area where the illuminated area is up to 10 sq. m such as in this case then the maximum permitted recommended luminance levels should be 600 cd/m². It is therefore recommended a condition is attached to ensure the luminance would not exceed this level to safeguard amenity.

Public Safety

Policy 8 of SPG3 states that advertisements should not obstruct visibility, interfere with the interpretation of road signs or traffic signals, or distract the attention of drivers. Due to the application site being located in a pedestrianised street there would be no impact on traffic safety and being located above the fascia there would be no impact on pedestrian safety. There is a public right of way to the south of the building but this is not affected by the projecting sign.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The retention of the projecting sign is considered acceptable in respect of amenity and public safety and would preserve the character and appearance of the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area.

Recommendation: Grant Advertisement Consent

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	25th October 2022	Dated:	25 October 2022