

Delegated Report

Advertisement Application

Planning Application No: 20250419

Location: 29 King Street Gravesend Kent

Description: Consent to display advertisement(s); Erection of external fascia panel, projected double sided sign and a illuminated trough light.

Applicant: Mr Abdul Zubair

Site Visit Date: 30 May 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Cover Letter;
- Application form;
- Drawing no. 29-2 – Location & Block Plan; and
- Drawing no. 29-1 – Proposed Front Elevation.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20150543	Display of new window merchandising comprising 2no. chevrons, 3no. A0 light pockets on the King Street and Windmill Street elevations and an internally illuminated tablet below ATM on Windmill Street elevation.	Refused	19.08.2015
19930615	The attachment of an illuminated fascia sign on the King Street Elevation.	Consent	09.12.1993
19930580	Display of 2 no. internally illuminated fascia signs on the King Street elevation.	Consent	09.12.1993
19930243	Display of two projecting signs partially illuminated internally, one on the Windmill Street elevation and one on the King Street elevation.	Permitted	27.07.1993

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development affecting a Conservation Area
- TC8 – Advertisement Control

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Conservation Area

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG3: Advertisement Control policy guidelines (1996, amended 2020)
- King Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)
- Management Plan Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

No response from:

- Ward Councillors

Neighbouring properties

No neighbouring properties were consulted or site notice – Section 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 does not state that neighbour notification or a site notice are required. It states the following in respect of the consultation that needs to be carried out:

12.—(1) Before granting an express consent, a local planning authority shall consult—
(a) any neighbouring local planning authority, any part of whose area appears likely to be affected;
(b) where the application relates to land in a National Park which is land that is not in a metropolitan county, the district planning authority for the area in which the land is situated;
(c) where they consider that a grant of consent may affect the safety of persons using any trunk road (as defined in section 329 of the Highways Act 1980(1)) in England, the Secretary of State for Transport;
(d) where they consider that a grant of consent may affect the safety of persons using any railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military), the person responsible for the operation thereof, and, in the case of coastal waters, the Corporation of Trinity House.
(2) The local planning authority shall give anyone whom they are required to consult at least 14 days' notice that the relevant application is to be considered and shall take into account any representations made by any such person.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of a three storey building situated on the southern side of King Street. The ground floor was last used as Natwest Bank as part of nos. 29-31 King Street but is now vacant with Natwest having closed in early 2025.

The proposal is for display of a new fascia sign and projecting sign. When Natwest was in occupation the signage was as follows:



An aluminium panel with individually applied lettering and logo, there did not appear to be any illumination.

The previous Natwest signage has now been removed and the building currently appears as follows:



The proposal for the fascia sign is an aluminium composite panel in mint green with a matt finish. It would be 900mm in height, 8.6m in width and 50mm projection. There would be individual lettering stating 'KINGS AFRO FRESH MARKET' with 70mm projection in .8mm aluminium and aluminium composite panel in white with both the projection and face of the lettering in a matt finish.

Underneath this lettering would be the words 'FRESH MEAT, FROZEN FISH, GROCERIES, EXIOTIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES' and the no. '29' in the top right hand corner for the building number. These would be flat cut from 3mm aluminium composite panel in yellow in a matt finish and mounted on the panel directly.

The lettering would be illuminated with trough lighting for a width of 6.7m. It would be black in a matt finish and the luminance level would be 896.5 cd/m².

The proposal for the projecting sign is a circular sign on a bracket which would be 800mm in diameter with Perspex panels. The projecting sign would be non-illuminated and the frame would be mint green in colour with the same text as the fascia sign in the same white and yellow colouring.

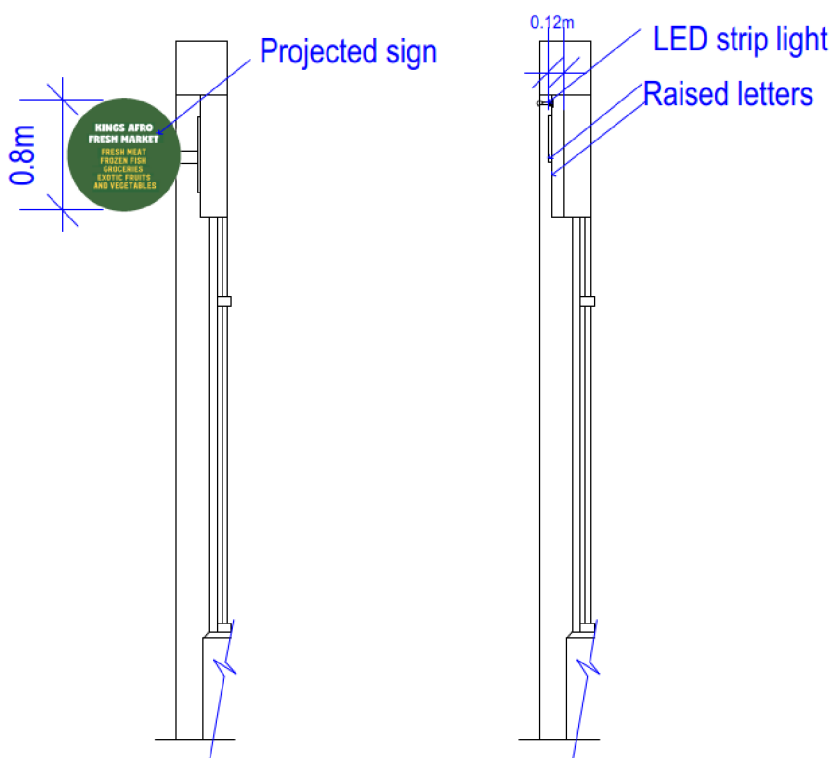
The proposed elevation and cross sections are as follows:



A closer view of the fascia sign and projecting signs are as follows:



Front Elevation



Section at AA'

Section at BB'

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

- Visual Amenity; and
- Public Safety.

Visual Amenity

At a national level the NPPF (2024) 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 141). 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

The Council's adopted Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines (1996, amended 2020) 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 the King Street Conservation Area and adjacent to a listed building at no. 30 King Street. In this respect Policies 5 is relevant which states that in or adjoining Conservation Areas and on listed buildings, or in a position which would affect the setting of a listed building, 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 or listed building.

Also of relevance is the Councils Shopfront design sheets (2020) specifically sheet no. 5 which deals with signs and advertisements which has detailed guidance to encourage improvement to advertisement design in the interest of amenity, without damaging the viability of shops. It is stated that retailers should show restraint and not engage in excessive visual competition with neighbouring premises. It states that often subtle and simple schemes with regard to colours, size, design and lettering work best.

Amongst other things, the guidance states that the fascia should be appropriately proportioned with regard to the scale and overall height of the building and that excessively deep fascias should be avoided. The fascia should not extend beyond the pilasters/vertical shop front surround and not obstruct any other architectural detail, such as the cornices and corbels. It states that lettering or sign writing should usually be applied directly to the fascia and adding new fascia boards to an existing one should be avoided.

With regards lettering specifically it states that the fascia should normally state only the name or trade of the business and the street number. Oversized lettering and the application of too much additional information should be avoided as this can result in an unattractive appearance and visual cluttering, which is not acceptable; a more restrained use of signage and graphics works best. On wooden fascias the lettering should usually be hand painted. It states that traditionally the shopfront and fascia were painted in a muted colour with contrasting white, cream or gilt lettering. Individually fixed lettering (brass or other metal) is also a suitable solution. Letters should be sensibly proportioned in relation to the fascia, usually they should not exceed 60% of the depth of the fascia and upper case lettering is often the most appropriate on a traditional shopfront.

With regards lighting it states that shop signs should not need any special illumination where the level of street lighting and the light from the shop windows are adequate. It states that where external lighting is required it should be restricted to an absolute minimum and discreetly positioned, otherwise Advertisement Consent will not be granted. Wholly internally illuminated box signs, fascias and individual signs will not generally be acceptable. Trough lights extending over the full length of the fascia should equally be avoided due to their visual impact, unless they can be concealed within or beneath the cornice of the fascia. Lighting brackets should be either of a traditional or an unobtrusive, simple modern design and should be painted to match the background colour of the building (if this is rendered) or in black, or bronze anodised. Acceptable forms of lighting could include halo lighting (where letters stand proud of the fascia and are

individually illuminated from behind) or discreet hooded spotlights. Neon and fluorescent lighting tends to be out of place in historic areas and other areas of significant amenity value.

As stated above, the previous Natwest signage appeared to be a metal fascia sign with individual applied letters reading 'Natwest' with logo; neither appeared to be illuminated. Now it has been removed there is what appears to be a timber black board for the fascia.

In respect of the proposed fascia sign it is considered that it would not adhere to the guidance as set out in the shopfront design sheet 5. The fascia sign at 900mm would be deep and extend down so the bottom of the sign would be right up against the corbels on the top of the door surround which is not respectful. The previous Natwest sign was approximately one third less in depth and did not extend as far down so there was still good clearance between the bottom of the sign and the shopfront detailing below. The lettering would not be applied directly to the timber board but instead would be a new fascia board added to the existing board which the guidance states should be avoided.

The lettering on the sign would be extremely cluttered and contain too much additional information. It doesn't just state the name of the business and the street number but has another line of words advising some of the types of items which can be bought in the shop. The lettering particularly the 'KINGS AFRO FRESH MARKET' is too oversized, not in proportion and very thick and chunky. This all results in an unacceptable sign which is of an unattractive and cluttered appearance. The green, yellow and white colour scheme for the sign is fairly garish colours, is not of muted tones for this historic building and further adds to the unacceptability of the sign.

The lighting is not restricted to an absolute minimum nor discreetly positioned being positioned on the fascia sign above the lettering to a length of 6.7m and a luminance level would be 896.5 cd/m². Although the trough lighting would not extend the full width of the fascia it would extend the majority of its width. The trough lighting is not concealed within or beneath the cornice. The Institute of Lighting Professionals Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements advises that the maximum recommended level is 600 cd/m² for a site in the urban area. The proposed fascia sign would far exceed this level. This would make the fascia sign even more prominent and garish.

In respect of the projecting sign, the Shopfront design sheet 5 (2020) states that in historic areas traditional signs that take the form of swinging signs hung from decorative wrought iron brackets are the most appropriate. There should not be more than one hanging sign per shopfront, should keep a certain vertical clearance from the pavement to the underside of the sign, should not obscure any views from windows and views onto existing signs to an unreasonable extent and traditionally, the position for hanging signs has been at first floor window level.

The proposed projecting sign would be located on the left hand end of the fascia sign, its size at 800mm is fairly large and it would have Perspex panels which it is stated in the guidance should be avoided. The sign would have the same large amount of lettering on it that the fascia sign would have so not just the business name but all the lettering about what type of products one can purchase in the shop. Furthermore, the same garish colour scheme of green, yellow and white as the fascia sign would be used.

The proposed fascia and projecting signs would not be a sympathetic or authentic additions to the building or the character of the area and would cause harm in respect of visual amenity. As such they would also not preserve the character or appearance of the King Street Conservation Area but would cause harm to it. The building to the west no. 30 King is a grade II listed building, given the close proximity of the application building to no. 30 King Street (Natwest previously occupied both buildings) and the size, prominence and unacceptable design of the proposed fascia and projecting signs, it is considered that they would have a harmful impact on the setting of this adjacent listed building at no. 30 King Street. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policies, TC2, TC3 and TC8 (LPFR).

Photos of other signage in King Street have been provided by the agent in the covering letter. The Goose public house example was permitted in 20240159. This has a muted colour, much smaller length of trough lighting and less words on the signs:



The Santander, 4 King Street example was permitted under application ref. 20250025. The fascia and projecting signs were the same location, size and design as the previous signage from an earlier permission in 2009, the fascia sign was non-illuminated, the projecting sign was illuminated but with a low luminance of 120 cd/m2:



The Kings Head Sports Bar, 8-9 King Street example was permitted under application ref. 20110823 and is a fascia sign with halo illuminated lettering. The shopfront design guidance states that halo illuminated lettering is an appropriate method for illumination and the sign is in a muted colour scheme.

The Kings Food, 10 King Street example, there is no history of Advertisement Consent for the signage in place and this will need to be investigated further:



The examples given do not therefore justify the poor signage proposed in this case. There are no

examples of Advertisement Consent being granted since the current development for replacement signage as the type that is proposed in this current application which for the reasons given above is of unacceptable design.

Public Safety

Policy 8 of the Advertisement Control Policy Guidelines (1996, amended 2020) 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 location of the signage, it would not obstruct any visibility for drivers, road signs or distract drivers. King Street is also a pedestrianised street between 10am – 8pm. Due to the height of the signs there would be no impact on pedestrian safety.

Conclusion

The proposed signage is considered acceptable in respect of public safety but is not acceptable in respect of amenity. They would also not preserve the character or appearance of the King Street Conservation Area and would be harmful to the setting of the grade II listed no. 30 King Street.

Recommendation – Refusal

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	19th June 2025	Dated:	19 June 2025