

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13th November 2019

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191632/ADV

Address: Various Locations within Reading Town Centre

Proposal: Retention of existing non-illuminated direction, place identification, other feature signs and interpretation panels within public pedestrian areas in Reading town centre and the Abbey Quarter on a permanent basis. Additional directional signage on a permanent basis.

Target decision date: 3rd December 2019

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Advertisement Consent

Conditions to include:

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard Advertisement Conditions in accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. The applicant is reminded to have due care to not place new signage (Z11) in a position on that would prevent access to, block views from or hinder the camera workings, repairs or operation
3. Positive and Proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

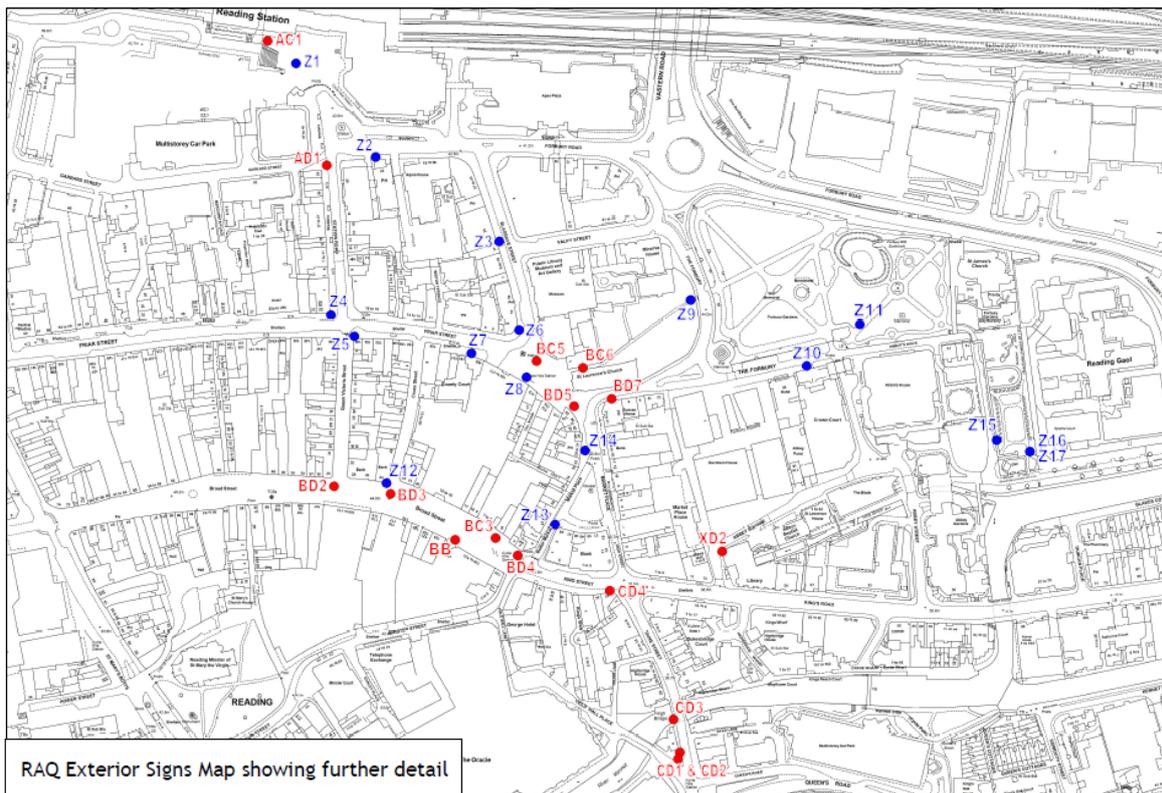
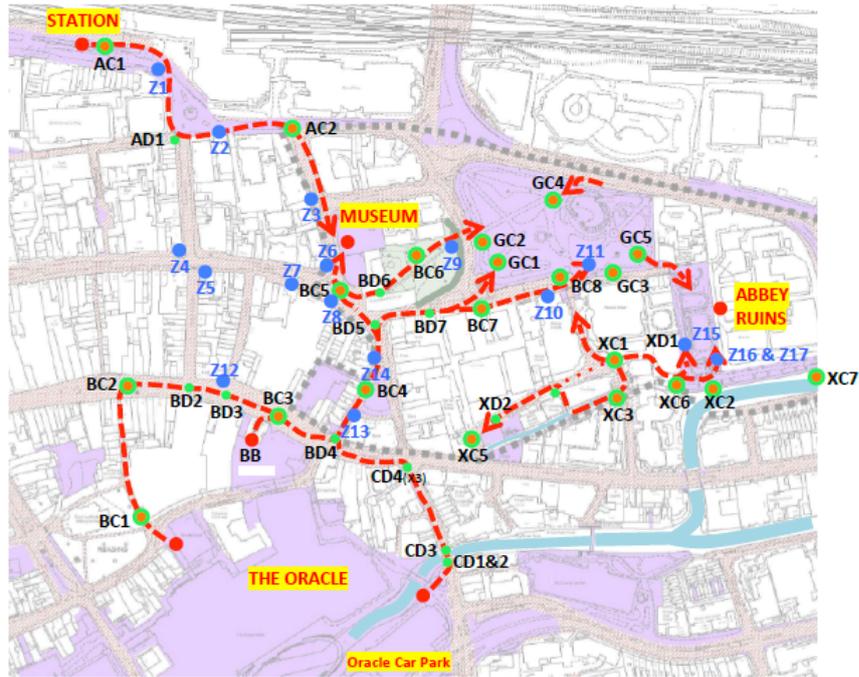
- 1.1 The advertisement consent application relates to various public locations spread across Reading Town Centre, spanning from Station Hill to the north, south to London Street, Broad Street and the junction with Chain Street to the west and across to Chestnut Walk towards the eastern part of the town centre.
- 1.2 The application also includes locations within the Abbey Ruins area, (which is Grade I listed and a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument and is a site

of significant historic and archaeological importance), as well as locations within the listed park and garden area of Forbury Gardens and the St Marys Butts/Castle Street and Market Place/London Street Conservation Areas.

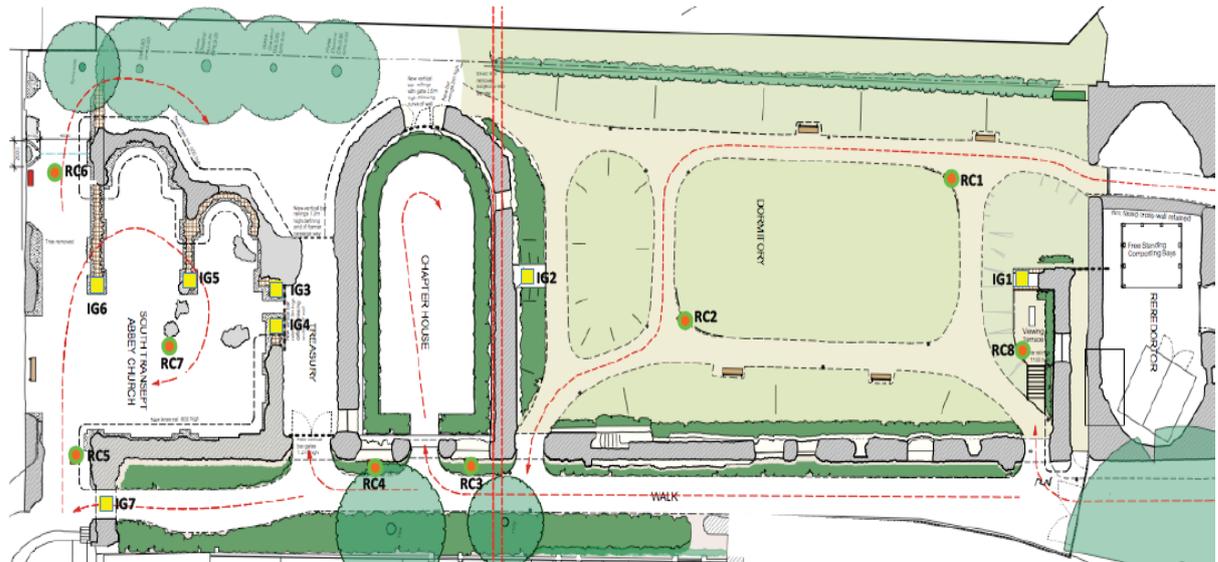
- The application is to be determined by Planning Applications Committee as the applicant is Reading Borough Council.

17 New directional signage beginning with 'Z' and shown in blue.

51 Signs to be retained on a permanent basis is indicated by other codes



Abbey Ruins Locations



2. PROPOSAL & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposal seeks advertisement consent for various non-illuminated direction, place identification, other feature signs and interpretation panels within public pedestrian areas in Reading town centre and the Abbey Quarter. The signs would incorporate information and history relating to the Abbey Quarter as well as directional information for the general public. The location of each of the proposed signs is indicated on the plans above.
- 2.2 51 of these advertisements were permitted by Committee under reference number 170962 and are in place (including 24 advertisements on existing infrastructure and 27 interpretation boards). However advertisement consent was only granted for 5 years. This application seeks to retain these existing signs on a permanent basis, along with the installation of 17 new directional signs which would all be placed on existing street furniture. In total, 68 signs would be located around the town centre.
- 2.3 The locations of the signage are illustrated on the maps above. The locations highlighted in blue beginning with 'Z' are the proposed new signs. All others indicate where signage is already located and proposed to remain on a permanent basis, some of which are within the Abbey Ruins, as indicated on the map above.
- 2.4 The following 51 signs are already in place, and permanent consent is applied for:
- 16 x square or tubular graphic collar sleeves to be attached to lamp/sign posts, bollards and other existing signage structures and street furniture (max 1.8m in height and 0.6m in width)
 - 7 x in-ground graphic plaques (0.5m x 0.5m)
 - 1 x double sided plaque set within railings (0.5m wide and 0.2m in height)

- 27 information boards which measure 1.3m in height, 1.2m in width and depth of 0.7m. They are angled upwards to aid readability. The structures themselves are steel framed with concrete bases foundations and 2 eco board display panels.
- 2.5 The new 17 directional signs proposed to be located on existing street furniture are:
- 13 x tubular graphic collar sleeves to be attached to lamp/sign posts, bollards and other existing signage structures and street furniture (max height 0.6m, depth 0.12m)
 - 3 x signs fixed to railings. Height (0.30m) x width (0.43m) x depth (0.03m)
 - 1 x graphic on collar fixing around existing lamppost. Height (0.40m) x width (0.50m) x depth (0.50m)
- 2.6 The works would also require Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 for which a separate application is required to be made to Historic England to retain the signage within the Abbey Ruins on a permanent basis.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 170962/ADV - Non-illuminated direction, place identification, other feature signs and interpretation panels within public pedestrian areas in Reading town centre and the Abbey Quarter - Application Permitted

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 RBC Transport - No objection.
- 4.2 Historic England - No comments.
- 4.3 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - No comments at the time the report was written.
- 4.4 Public consultation:
As an application for advertisement consent no neighbour notification is has been carried out or is required.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 apply.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the

desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework
Part 7 - Requiring good design

5.3 Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
OU4: Advertisements

6. APPRAISAL

(i) Legal context

6.1 Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

6.2 Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

(ii) Main Issues

6.3 The main issues are considered to be:
a) The effect upon visual amenity and the public realm.
b) The effect upon public safety.

a) The effect upon visual amenity and the public realm

6.4 The nature of the proposal is for a clearly defined advertisement scheme to provide information and direction to members of the public regarding the historic Abbey Quarter. As such the proposed signage would not be comparable to, or open the way for, similar levels of signage outside of such a defined advertisement scheme. Whilst land ownership is not usually a planning consideration, it is relevant to note that the land and structures to which this application relates are controlled by the Council and as such there is an additional level of control of the signage.

- 6.5 It is therefore considered that because the signs form a clearly defined advertisement scheme that is limited and controlled in its extent, approval of this application would not set an undesirable precedent for additional signage from other sources within the town centre.
- 6.6 Policy OU4 states that advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have detrimental impact on public safety. It also specifies that the cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable.
- 6.7 Policy CC7 seeks high quality design and that the appearance of proposals should maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located, whilst Policy EN1 seeks to preserve or enhance the Readings heritage assets.
- 6.8 51 of the proposed signs are already erected and advertisement consent is sought to maintain these on a permanent basis. It is not considered that their permanent status would conflict with the above policies, as was the case under application 170962. The LPA has no knowledge that the signs already in place have been the subject of complaints or caused controversy.
- 6.9 17 new directional signs are proposed which would utilise existing infrastructure and street-furniture (lamp posts, existing street signs, bollards, railings, benches) for their display. Therefore these signs do not involve the erection of specific advertisement structures.
- 6.10 By using existing essential street infrastructure for an additional purpose in a modest and controlled manner the proposed advertisements would not result in any harm to visual amenity by adding clutter. Similarly, attached to existing infrastructure these modest additions are not considered to harm the setting of listed buildings dotted throughout the town centre or the listed Forbury Gardens Park and Garden. Rather they would promote, direct and inform members of the public of the historic significance of these parts of Reading's Town Centre in a discreet and controlled manner.

b) The effect upon public safety

- 6.11 The siting of the proposed advertisement has been reviewed by transport development control officers. The CCTV operator noted that advertisements BD2, BD5 and Z11 are located on existing CCTV posts. The advice is that as long as these signs do not prevent access to, block views from or hinder the camera workings, repairs or operation then there is no conflict. An

informative would be attached reminding the applicant to have due care to this effect.

- 6.12 None of the proposed advertisements or associated structures results in any detrimental impact on sight lines and would ensure sufficient footway is retained for pedestrians. The proposals do not seek to introduce additional illumination and are not considered to represent a distraction to road users.
- 6.13 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The proposed development pertains to the safety of children who require additional protection and supervision.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 When assessed for their impact on amenity and public safety, the proposed signage is found to be acceptable and complies with national and local policy so advertisement consent can be granted.

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Plans Considered

Drawing ref. 1405-E10 - Ext Interpretation Sign Type 1

Drawings ref. Abbey Quarter Interpretation Panel Locations no.s 1 - 8

Drawings ref. Abbey Quarter signage locations no.s 1 - 3

Document ref. Summary of Exterior Interpretation Signage

Drawing ref: eq=al RAQ Exterior Signs Map -08.07.19

Document ref: Reading Abbey Quarter Exterior Signage Individual Locations 08.07.19

Received 9th October 2019

RAQ Exterior Signs Map showing further detail

Received 24th October 2019