

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA NO  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE 22 JULY 2007**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,  
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES**

**09/1326/ADV**

**Franks Flooring, 101A High Street, Stockton-on-Tees**

**Revised retrospective application for erection of 3 No. non-illuminated canopy signs and 2 no. non-illuminated fascia signs.**

**Expiry Date 29 July 2009**

### **SUMMARY**

Retrospective approval is sought for the erection of three non-illuminated canopy signs and two non-illuminated fascia signs. Six petition letters of support have been received with a further five letters of support. Whilst these are not from neighbouring residents they are from patrons and shops within Stockton High Street. The Councils Historic buildings officer has objected to the development on the grounds that the signage runs almost the full height of the building in contrast to the majority of signs within the town centre which are horizontal across the shop frontages. Consequently the sign appears out of scale and context with the host building and surrounding street scene. However the Historic Buildings officer accepts that, although canopies are not common within the conservation Area, the canopy to which this application relates has been in place since the 1930s. Therefore there is no objection to the retention of the canopy.

The Head of Technical services has also objected to the proposal on the grounds that the scale and character of the signs are considered to be inappropriate for Stockton High Street, creating a negative impact on the visual character of the area.

Initiatives such as SHIP (Stockton Heritage and Partnership scheme) and the development urban design framework/management framework for the town centre are centred around improving the quality of design and conserving the distinct historic character of Stockton Town Centre. Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been numerous large signs on the building in the past these have done little to improve the facade of the building. As such it is considered that the development has a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area contrary to policy GP1 and EN24 of the adopted Stockton on tees Local Plan and guidance within SPG1.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Planning application 09/1326/ADV be Refused for the following reason and the Director of Law and Democracy be authorised to take all necessary enforcement action to secure the removal of all unauthorised signs**

**01. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the scale and design of the fascia signs create an incongruous feature in the street scene which adversely impacts upon the character of the existing building, the wider street scene and is detrimental to the visual**

**amenity and character of Stockton Town Centre Conservation area, contrary to the saved Policies GP1 and EN24 of the Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and PPG19.**

**BACKGROUND**

Previous applications for signage have been approved at the application site. In 1992 alterations to the front elevation and the erection of illuminated canopy signs and high level fascia signs were approved (92/0563/P) in 1997 the erection of an internally illuminated canopy sign and internally illuminated projecting sign were approved (97/1114/P).

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant is seeking retrospective permission for the erection of three non-illuminated canopy signs and two non-illuminated fascia signs. The canopy projects approximately 2.4 metres. As such the two signs to the side of the canopy measure approximately 2.4 metres in width with a height of approximately 0.9 metres. The sign to the front of the canopy measures approximately 4.4 metres with a height of approximately 0.9 metres. The two fascia signs run vertically the length of the building with a height of approximately 10 metres and a width of approximately 0.6 metres.

The design of the signs consists of a blue background with white lettering which reads 'FRANKS FLOORING'.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The following Consultations were notified and comments received are summarised below:-

**Conservation Officer**

The former cinema building at 101 High Street was originally the Exchange Hall (built 1873-4), in 1910 it was converted into a motion picture house and in 1912 it was renamed The Cinema. In 1937 it was destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt and re-opened in 1938. The Cinema closed as a picture house in 1964 and became the Essoldo Bingo and in 1981 Ladbrokes Social Club.

Art deco buildings which survive in much of their original form are commonly listed due to high architectural quality however can often appear alien in their surroundings due to their very different contrasting architectural style.

The original frontage of the building may well be preserved behind the existing cladding system as the form of the building we see today is the same plot width as the 'original' building on site. Although the cinema to the rear was demolished and an extension for a carpet warehouse erected in its place therefore much of the building has been lost.

The introduction of SPG shop front design guide in 2004 was intended to lift the quality of shop front design in Stockton town centre, which is a large conservation area. The conservation area appraisal carried out in 2006 identified that there are many poor examples of shop fronts and inappropriate signage in the High Street area which needed to be addressed.

Initiatives such as the SHIP (Stockton Heritage and Partnership Scheme) and the developing urban design framework/management framework for the town centre is centred around improving design quality in general and conserving the uniquely distinct historic character of Stockton town centre.

Although it is recognised that there have been numerous large signs on the building since the 1930's these have done little to enhance the façade of the building and therefore the street scene or wider conservation area.

My main concern with the application is the signage running almost the full height of the building. This is in direct contrast to the majority of fascia signs in the town centre which run horizontally across the buildings at fascia height level. Consequently the sign appears out of scale and context with the host building and street scene.

Although canopies are not common in the Stockton town centre conservation area I recognise that a canopy has been in place since the 1930's. Canopies were common on art deco buildings and the retention of this helps to tell the story of the buildings history. I therefore have no objection to its retention and consider that the current harsh visual impact is a result of the excessive signage on the frontage and not as a result of the canopy signage itself.

I do not consider that the current proposal preserves or enhances the character of this property and therefore the wider conservation area, the application conflicts with SPG 1 and I would therefore recommend refusal of the application on amenity grounds.

### **Head of Technical Services**

#### General Summary

Urban Design objects to this application as detailed below.

#### Highways Comments

We have no objections to the proposed signs.

#### Landscape & Visual Comments & Built Environment Comments

I object to this application on the basis that the scale & character of the signs are inappropriate for Stockton High Street setting, creating a negative impact on the visual character of the area.

### **PUBLICITY**

Neighbours were notified and comments received are summarised below :-

G Lippe

46 Windermere Road' Stockton-on-Tees

Supports the application as the signage is a credit to the high street and more of this quality and appearance should be actively encouraged to help the High Street keep a vibrant shopping parade

J P Nesbitt

7 Thorntree Court' Thornaby

Supports the application as the signage is a credit to the high street and more of this quality and appearance should be actively encouraged to help the High Street keep a vibrant shopping parade

N Bourne

157 Flatts Lane' Normanby

Supports the application as the signage is a credit to the high street and more of this quality and appearance should be actively encouraged to help the High Street keep a vibrant shopping parade

S Rooney

7 Cross Street' Norton

Supports the application as the signage is a credit to the high street and more of this quality and appearance should be actively encouraged to help the High Street keep a vibrant shopping parade

D Lippe

46 Windermere Road' Stockton-on-Tees

Supports the application as the signage is a credit to the high street and more of this quality and appearance should be actively encouraged to help the High Street keep a vibrant shopping parade

A Barker

Chapel Road ' Billingham

Support the addition to the High Street

Mrs Blakemore

32 Myrtle Road' Stockton-on-Tees

Supports the application

Mrs B Peat

38 Greylands Avenue' Norton

supports the application

Mr And Mrs Andrew

21 Fairville Road' Stockton-on-Tees

support the application it brightens up the high street, more signs should be encouraged as it would make it a more welcoming place for much needed custom and business.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, Part 1(3) A local planning authority shall 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.

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

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 signal 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.

In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed and unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

### **Policy GP1**

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

### **Policy EN24-**

New Development within Conservation Areas will be permitted where:

- (i) The siting and design of the proposal does not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area; and
- (ii) The scale, mass detailing, materials are appropriate to the character and appearance of the Area

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site is a commercial property within Stockton High Street which is within Stockton Town Centre Conservation Area. The property forms part of the secondary shopping frontage. The property was originally Exchange Hall which was built in 1873-4 and has since been a cinema, a social club and more recently received permission for a change of use to an A1 retail unit.

The neighbouring properties consist of an amusement arcade and a newsagent. Directly to the front of the site is a wide pedestrianised area, beyond which is a highway "The High Street" and opposite the Castlegate Centre.

### **MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main considerations of this application relate to the impact on visual amenity and the impact on highway and public safety and whether it satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies and Government Guidance. The impact on the character of the Stockton Town Centre Conservation Area will also be considered.

PPG19; Outdoor Advertisement Control states that applications must be considered against amenity and public safety. As such, the main issues for consideration when assessing this application are the potential impact upon the amenity of neighbouring land users, implications for highway safety and the impact upon the character of the surrounding conservation area.

### **Visual Amenity**

Objections have been received from the Head of Technical Services and the Councils Historic buildings officer largely on the grounds that the scale of the development appears out of scale and context with the host property and the surrounding conservation area.

Initiatives such as SHIP (Stockton Heritage and Partnership Scheme) and the developing urban design framework/management for the town centre is centred around improving the design quality,

