

Committee	PLANNING COMMITTEE (C)	
Report Title	155 LEWISHAM WAY SE14 6QP	
Ward	Brockley	
Contributors	Jan Mondrzejewski	
Class	PART 1	Date: 03 FEBRUARY 2011

Reg. No. DC/10/75790

Application dated 26.10.2010

Applicant RPS Planning and Development on behalf of Big Yellow Storage Company Ltd.

Proposal The display of 4 internally illuminated signs on the front and side elevations.

Applicant's Plan Nos. 0527-09C (part amended 23/12/10), 10A, 11A & 12A (as amended in red) & Advertisement Schedule.

Background Papers

- (1) Case File DE/10/155/TP
- (2) PPS 5 Planning and the Historic Environment
- (3) Adopted Unitary Development Plan (July 2004)
- (4) Brockley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and SPD
- (3) The London Plan (February 2008) Consolidated with Alterations Since 2004.

Zoning PTAL 6a  
Defined Employment Area  
A Road

## 1.0 Property/Site Description

- 1.1 The application relates to signage on a proposed Big Yellow self-storage warehouse for which planning permission was granted at appeal on 10th March 2010. Construction of the building has yet to commence. The application site currently forms part of an industrial estate constructed in the early 1980s which is accessed from Lewisham Way. To the east the site adjoins shops in Tanners Hill, mainly Victorian in date, which have now been largely converted/redeveloped for residential purposes. This includes the former Art Deco Pynes Department store at the junction of Tanners Hill and Lewisham Way, now known as Inner City House, which has an A2 (betting shop) use at ground floor level. This building has attractive Art Deco street elevations but a rather utilitarian west elevation which adjoins the application site and is prominent in views from Lewisham Way. The application site is identified in the Adopted UDP as a defined employment area.
- 1.2 To the rear of the site, are two open storage employment sites which are proposed for residential use in the UDP. These are located at a much higher level to the application site and are accessed from Tanners Hill.

- 1.3 To the west of the application site is a terrace of Victorian shops with residential above comprising two storeys and attic. These properties appear to have recently been refurbished and have white painted rendered elevations.
- 1.4 On the opposite side of the road to the application site are Victorian and modern shops with residential accommodation above and the Grade II listed former Deptford Public Library (now the Art House). The Art House building is constructed in dark grey brick and Portland stone. The Art House and properties in Lewisham Way to the south west of the building are within the Brockley Conservation Area.

## **2.0 Planning History**

- 2.1 Prior to the erection of the industrial estate the site was occupied by a cul-de-sac of Victorian terraced housing known as Alexandra Cottages and various commercial buildings. Planning permission was granted in October 1980 for the erection of 16 industrial/warehouse units on the sites of 149-163 Lewisham Way, 89-91 Florence Road and 1-12 (consec) Alexandra Cottages. This proposal included the widening of Alexandra Cottages to provide the vehicular access to the site.
- 2.2 In March 2010, planning permission was granted at appeal for the demolition of industrial units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, & 10 on the site of 155 Lewisham Way SE14 and the construction of a four storey, plus basement, self storage warehouse (Use Class B8) with reception area fronting Lewisham Way, together with the provision of 21 car parking spaces and 8 bicycle spaces at the rear of the site, associated landscaping and boundary treatment works and associated works. The consented building would have four levels including a semi-basement level. The building will have a street frontage of 45 metres, it would be up to 52 metres in depth and up to 17 metres high. It would be 9 metres high from ground to eaves level adjacent to 165-169 Lewisham Way. As with the current industrial units, the building would be set down into the site behind the footpath on Lewisham Way. On the street frontage the building would have slightly projecting elements at either end, one of which would accommodate the reception area. The central element would have a substantial area of glazing framed with solid panels. Proposed materials are brick, render and a mixture of composite and rainscreen cladding.
- 2.3 In December 2010 advertisement consent was refused for two large high level illuminated signs displaying the website and telephone number of the proposed self storage warehouse. These were each proposed to be 8m long and were proposed above the glazed panels on the south (street) elevation. The signs were refused as they were considered to detract from the quality of the building and would have an overpowering impact on the local street scene.

## **3.0 Present Application**

- 3.1 The current application was originally submitted as one for a total of six signs on the building, however the two signs described in paragraph 2.3 above were considered unacceptable and consent has been refused. Unlike in applications for planning permission that comprise different elements, it is possible for the local planning authority to issue a 'split' decision in respect of advertisements.
- 3.2 The current application proposes four internally illuminated signs. Three of the proposed signs would be identical square shaped signs 2.5m x 2.5m, to be displayed at an angle and depict the Big Yellow logo, including the name.

Two of these signs are proposed at high level on the prominent corner entrance element of the building adjoining the vehicle entrance to the site. One is proposed above the street entrance; one would be on the west elevation, set approximately 2.5m back from the front corner of the building, while the third is also proposed on the west elevation close to the rear corner of the building. The remaining sign is a relatively small rectangular fascia sign above the street entrance.

#### **4.0 Consultations and Replies**

##### Neighbours and Local Amenity Societies

4.1 Letters of consultation were sent to local residents adjoining and facing the site, together with notices on site. Ward Councillors were also consulted.

- (1) Three replies from the occupiers of Nos 132 & 158 Lewisham Way and 85 Rokeby Road, objecting to the application on the following grounds:-
- (2) The proposed illuminated signs would give rise to unnecessary light pollution/glare.
- (3) The proposed signage will have a detrimental impact on the character of the Brockley Conservation Area which is located on the opposite side of the road.
- (4) The proposed signage is excessive and will create a cluttered appearance.
- (5) Existing light sources such as street lights, bus shelters and shop signs already intrude upon resident's sleep patterns.

(Letters are available to members).

##### Amenity Society Panel

4.2 Objection. The signs with telephone number and email are over-large and unnecessary. They also detract from the Grade II listed Arthouse on the opposite side of the road. The Panel also objected to the two Big Yellow logos on the corner of the building and suggested that the south west one be omitted. The signs should be externally illuminated.

#### **5.0 Policy Context**

##### PPS 5: Planning and the Historic Environment

5.1 This recently published guidance sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. This replaces Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) published on 14 September 1994; and Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16), published on 21 November 1990.

PPS 5, policy HE9.1 states that: -

“Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated asset should require clear and convincing justification.”

PPS 5, policy HE10.1 relates to setting and states:-

“When considering applications for development that affects the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, local planning authorities should weigh any negative harm against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to be justify approval”.

## 5.2 The London Plan

Paragraph 4.101 advises that good design is rooted firmly in an understanding and appreciation of the local social, historical and physical context, including urban form, movement patterns and historic character.

Policy 4B.11 London's Built Heritage, states that the Mayor will work with strategic partners to protect and enhance London's historic environment. DPD policies should seek to maintain and increase the contribution of the built heritage to London's environmental quality.

Policy 4B.12 Heritage Conservation, states that Boroughs should ensure that the protection and enhancement of historic assets in London are based on an understanding of their special character and form part of the wider design and urban improvement agenda, including their relationship to adjoining areas.

## 5.3 Adopted Unitary Development Plan

The saved policies of the Adopted Unitary Development Plan relevant to this application are:-

URB 3 Urban Design

URB 9 Signs and Hoardings

URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas.

URB 18 Preserving Listed Buildings

HSG 4 Residential Amenity

## 5.4 Supplementary Planning Documents

Brockley Conservation Area Character Appraisal and SPD

## 5.5 Local Development Framework

On 19 February 2010 Lewisham Council published its proposed submission version of the Core Strategy. This is the principal Development Plan Document and once adopted, will replace many of the policies in the current UDP. It is a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission, but it will not form part of the Development Plan for the Borough until it is formally adopted. Government advice on the weight to be attached to emerging DPD policies remains that this is determined upon the stage of preparation or review, increasing as successive stages are reached.

Although the emerging draft Core Strategy has been the subject of public consultation, it will carry limited weight in the determination of planning applications because consultation is at an early stage in the preparation process.

## **6.0 Planning Considerations**

- 6.1 In considering applications for advertisement consent the local planning authority must determine applications on the basis of public safety and amenity considerations.

There are several commercial/retail premises in the vicinity on Lewisham Way, some of which have illuminated fascia signs. In the context of a relatively busy street it is not considered that the proposed signs would have an adverse impact on public safety.

With respect to amenity considerations the main planning considerations are (a) the impact of the proposed signage on the quality of the building, the local streetscene and the designated heritage assets comprising the Brockley Conservation Area and the Grade II listed Art House, which are located on the opposite side of the street, and (b) the impact of the illuminated signs on the amenities of residential occupiers in the local area.

- 6.2 On the first of these issues, officers consider that the proposed building, compared with the existing industrial buildings which present a blank façade to the street, represents an enhancement of the site in urban design and streetscape terms. However, an attractive building can be marred by excessive use of advertising and of poor design. In this case the proposed signs are not considered to be excessive in relation to the scale of the building. A certain level of signage is considered reasonable so as to enable customers to identify the business. In the context of the large warehouse building the proposed signs are considered to be satisfactorily integrated into the architectural elements of the new building. The signs which now comprise the current application are in the opinion of officers reasonable signs for a building of this size. Officers consider that these signs, which make it clear that the self storage facility is operated by the applicant, are not excessive in relation to the size of the building. Although the ASP objected to the high level sign on the side elevation, officers consider that this sign would help vehicles on Lewisham Way approaching the building from the west to identify it and allow traffic wishing to enter the site the opportunity to slow down for this manoeuvre.
- 6.4 In addition to the impact of the proposed signage on the appearance of the building, an important consideration in this location is the impact of the proposed signage on the designated heritage assets opposite the application site which comprise the Brockley Conservation Area and the Grade II Listed Art House, which is a former Carnegie public Library of early 20th Century date. Saved policy URB 9 Signs and Hoarding of the Council's Adopted UDP states that within Conservation Areas and residential areas, internally illuminated box signs and projecting signs will not be permitted unless they can be successfully related to the design and detailing of the building and do not detract from the special character of a group of buildings or the street. The new PPS 5 requires local planning authorities to consider whether the significance of Heritage assets will be harmed by development affecting their setting. Saved Adopted UDP policy URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas, also states under (d) that in carrying out the policy,

the Council will 'resist development adjacent to a Conservation Area which has a negative impact on the character and appearance of that area'. Saved Adopted UDP policy URB 18 Preserving Listed Buildings, also states under (d) that the Council will 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings in considering any application in their vicinity...'. This part of Lewisham Way has a mixed commercial and residential character and it is not considered that the signs would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Listed Art House or on this part of the character and appearance of the Brockley Conservation Area. In addition to signs for which express consent is needed, business premises are also able to display certain signs with the benefit of 'deemed' consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Local Planning Authorities are able to exercise powers of discontinuance under the regulations if such displays are considered injurious to amenity.

- 6.5 Regarding impact on residential amenity, saved UDP policy HSG 4 Residential Amenity, states under (b) that the Council will resist the siting of incompatible development in or close to residential areas. The application premises are clearly adjoined by residential properties and the frontage to the street, on which the majority of the signage would be displayed, is located opposite residential premises. Several respondents have cited the issue of light pollution in the local area and one respondent states that current levels of night time luminance cause disruption to sleep patterns. Saved UDP policy ENV.PRO 12 Light Generating Development states that 'proposals for light generating development, floodlights or otherwise obtrusive lighting may be required to be accompanied by a detailed light impact survey outlining possible attenuation measures.' While a light impact survey has not been submitted, in the context of the heavily trafficked Lewisham Way, the degree of illuminated signage proposed is not considered excessive.
- 6.6 While officers consider that external illumination is often preferable on traditional shop fascias and is therefore a more acceptable form of illumination on shop premises in or close to conservation areas, in the case of a modern commercial building of the scale proposed in this location, internal illumination is not considered incompatible with the design of the proposed signs and the building.
- 6.7 In terms of impact on the amenities of local residential occupiers, the main impact is considered to be the effect on outlook rather than the additional illumination of the proposed signage, which is now much reduced following the refusal of consent for two large high level signs on the front of the building. The signage is considered to be proportional to the size and design of the building. It is not considered there would be a significant adverse effect on the outlook of nearby residential occupiers.

## **8.0 Consultations**

- 8.1 The points raised by the objectors to the application have been addressed in the preceding section.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The impact of the proposed signage on the appearance of the building, the setting of heritage assets and residential amenity is considered acceptable and for the reasons outlined above, the amended application is recommended for approval.

## **10.0 Summary of Reasons for Granting Consent**

10.1 On balance, it is considered that the proposal satisfies the Council's Land Use and environmental criteria, and is in accordance with Policies URB 3 Urban Design, URB 9 Signs and Hoardings, URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas, URB 18 Preserving Listed Buildings, HSG 4 Residential Amenity and ENV.PRO 12 Light Generating Development.

10.2 It is considered that the proposal is appropriate in terms of its form and design and would not result in material harm to the appearance or character of the surrounding area, or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is thereby in accordance with Policies URB 3 Urban Design, URB 9 Signs and Hoardings, URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas, URB 18 Preserving Listed Buildings, HSG 4 Residential Amenity and ENV.PRO 12 Light Generating Development.

**11.0 RECOMMENDATION: GRANT CONSENT** subject to the following condition:-

AD3 Illuminated Adverts - Compliance

### **Informatives**

- (1) You are advised that the street number of the proposed development should be displayed on the front elevation of the building adjoining the main entrance to the building or on the proposed fascia sign over the entrance.
- (2) As the display of significant numbers of additional deemed consent signs on the building may be damaging to the appearance of the building and the street scene in general, the Council will, if necessary, use its powers under The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 to secure the discontinuance such displays.