



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 27TH September 2012

APPLICATIONS:

12/03419/FU, ALTERATIONS TO FORM DIGITAL MEDIA ADVERTISING DISPLAY &

12/03420/ADV, ONE ILLUMINATED DIGITAL MEDIA ADVERTISING DISPLAY AT WEST RIDING HOUSE, 59-61 ALBION STREET, LEEDS, LS1 5AA

APPLICANT

MREF II WRH Limited

DATE VALID

7/8/12

TARGET DATE

2/10/12

Electoral Wards Affected:

City & Hunslet

Yes

Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE for the following reason:

12/03419/FU

The proposed digital media screen would be visible from along the length of Albion Place and as far as Kirkgate Market. The digital screen would be seen as a backdrop to several listed buildings and would be seen in the context of the City Centre Conservation Area. The screen would appear in contrast to the horizontal emphasis of the car park elevations and result in this currently background facade appearing prominent from within the conservation area therefore the siting of a digital media screen in this location would harmfully and significantly affect the setting of both the conservation area and listed buildings and in doing so would be contrary to Unitary Development Plan Review policies N19, CC5, BD8 and BD12 and guidance contained within CABE and English Heritage 'Large Digital Screens In Public Spaces' (2009).

12/03420/ADV

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Conservation Area. The screen would appear in contrast to the horizontal emphasis of the car park elevations and result in this currently background facade appearing prominent from within the conservation area therefore the siting of outdoor advertising in this location would harmfully and significantly affect the setting of both the conservation area and listed buildings and in doing so would be contrary to the Council's adopted SPD "Advertising Design Guide" and Unitary Development Plan Review policies BD8 and BD12 and guidance contained within CABE and English Heritage 'Large Digital Screens In Public Spaces' (2009).

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the umbrella report to this Plans Panel for those applications for digital media screens.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 It is proposed to introduce a digital media screen onto the eastern car park elevation of West Riding House. The screen would measure 5m x 6m and incorporate moving images but no sound. One of the three existing architectural features on the eastern car park façade, consisting of grey fins and canopy with downlighters, would be relocated one bay to the north to centre that feature on the Albion Place vista. The screen would be framed within this feature. The maximum luminance of the screen would not exceed 300cd/m² at night.
- 2.2 The applicant has confirmed such screens normally have voids periods of between 10-30% of their operating time therefore they are willing to offer the Council a proportion of this void period for promotion of the city and cultural events. The applicant has already contacted the Senior Marketing Manager within the Council to discuss this matter. The applicant has confirmed an offer of a minimum of three, two week advertisement slots.
- 2.3 The architectural feature is simply bolted onto the car park elevation therefore when it is relocated to the proposed location, the original car park elevation will be exposed once again. The display case would be bolted onto the elevation in its new location.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 The proposed screen would be located on the eastern elevation of the mid-level car park to West Riding House. The car park is located over the ground floor retail units with a 20 storey office building projecting above the car park. The lower levels of West Riding House were refurbished in 2005 to enhance the retail units at ground level, mid level car park and introduce three architectural features to break up the car park elevation.
- 3.2 The application site is within the Prime Shopping Quarter (PSQ) and the ground floor retail units are designated as being within a Prime Shopping Frontage (PSF).
- 3.3 Albion Street forms the boundary of the Central Area Conservation Area and the application site is located outside of, but adjacent to, the conservation area. The majority of buildings to the east of the site on Albion Place are grade II listed.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 None

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

- 5.1 Pre-application discussions commenced with officers in May 2012. The applicant originally proposed a much larger, 'landscape' orientated, screen around double the width of the existing. Such a scale of screen was not supported but it was indicated that a much smaller screen sited within the existing architectural feature could be considered acceptable.

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

- 6.1 Site notice posted for 12/03419/FU on 24/8/12.
- 6.2 A letter of representation has been received from Leeds Civic Trust who make the 'strongest possible objection' to the proposal on the grounds that it is a remarkably inappropriate location as it would dominate the head of the street which contains 11 listed buildings one of which is 18m away from the screen, as well as The Victoria Quarter and Kirkgate Market. The display would be dominating and distracting and detract from the visual amenity and character of Albion Place and part of Albion St. Whilst outside the Conservation Area it would be immediately adjacent to it which must be a 'strong consideration'.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

7.1 Non-statutory:

- 7.2 Highways: No objection.
- 7.3 Police Architectural Liaison Officer: No objection however would not want the screen used for the broadcast of events which may cause crowds to gather and could lead to a possible increase in both public disorder and street crime such as pick-pocketing due to members of the public being distracted. It may also distract those seated outside the cafes/restaurants on Albion Place and make handbags etc more susceptible to being stolen.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

- 8.1 The policy background is discussed in the umbrella report on this agenda.

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

- Amenity
- Public Safety

10.0 APPRAISAL

- 10.1 Amenity
- 10.2 West Riding house provides a backdrop to the long views along Albion Place, it is clearly visible from Kirkgate Market. At the moment, the base of West Riding House is a recessive and inactive element with a simple horizontal emphasis and painted a matt grey colour therefore the eye moves up the facade to the tinted curtain walling of the office building above which provides a vertical counterpoint to the long unbroken facades of Albion Place. Despite its size, West Riding House is a background building that allows the attractive historic buildings on Albion Place to remain prominent when travelling along this route. It is considered the long views

east-west and west-east across the centre of Leeds are extremely important and should be protected.

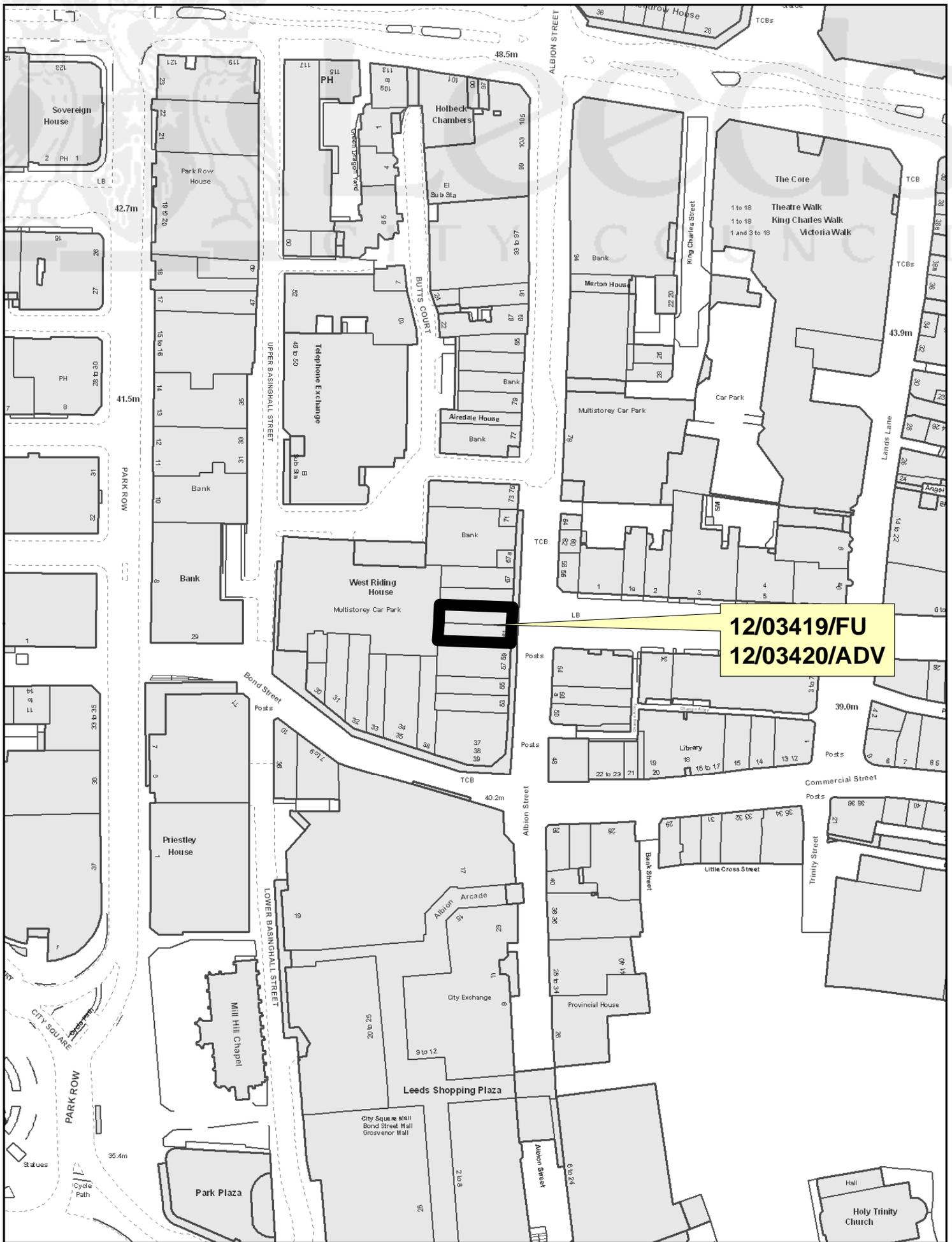
- 10.3 The proposed screen will terminate this important view and will draw the eye to West Riding House and down to the level of the car park in particular, which will become the focus of views and therefore take over the prominence afforded to the listed buildings and conservation area in general. It is considered this will be retrograde and harmful to the conservation area and setting of listed buildings.
- 10.4 The digital media screen would not be integrated into the façade of the car park. The display feature would sit proud of the existing elevation and its prominence would be further marked by the horizontal voids of the car park. It would also appear to cut across the horizontal structures of the car park decks.
- 10.5 It is acknowledged that digital media screens are a growing market and places like Leeds City Centre should embrace this new form of advertising. However, it is considered the proposed design and location of the screen would not enhance the visual amenities of the area and would have an adverse impact on the character and setting of the adjacent conservation area and listed buildings.
- 10.6 Public Safety
- 10.7 The proposed screen is located on, and visible from, pedestrianised streets therefore no highway safety concerns are raised. Due to the location of the screen high above street level there are no public safety concerns. The applicant has confirmed it is not intended to show events, the screen will simply be used for advertising therefore safety issues relating to large crowds and those seated outside cafes/restaurants are not a concern.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The proposed digital media screen would appear as an add on structure that is not integrated into the design of the building and would be visible from along the length of Albion Place and as far as the grade I listed Kirkgate Market. The digital screen would terminate an important long east-west view as a backdrop to several listed buildings on Albion Place and would be seen in the context of the City Centre Conservation Area. The screen would appear in contrast to the horizontal emphasis of the car park elevations and result in this currently background facade appearing prominent from within the conservation area therefore the siting of outdoor advertising in this location would harmfully and significantly affect the setting of both the conservation area and listed buildings and in doing so would be contrary to the Council's adopted SPD "Advertising Design Guide" and Unitary Development Plan Review policies BD8 and BD12.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Application files 12/03419/FU and 12/03420/ADV.
- 12.2 Certificate of Ownership, notice has been served on MREF II WRH Nominee Limited, C/O Moorfield Group Ltd.



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