



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 24th March 2016

SUBJECT: 16/00176/ADV - One illuminated rooftop sign, 16/00173/ADV - Eight illuminated signs, 16/00177/ADV - One illuminated projecting blade sign.

AT: John Lewis, Unit 45 Victoria gate, Harewood Street Leeds LS2 7AR

APPLICANT	DATE VALID	TARGET DATE
Brooker Flynn Architects	18.01.2016	14.03.2016

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

No

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: DEFER and DELEGATE approval to the Chief Planning officer subject to the conditions specified below (and any others which he might consider appropriate).

CONDITIONS:

- 1. Plans to be approved**
- 2. Full details and samples of materials and proposed fixings including colour finishes to be provided for on-site inspection**
- 3. Control of luminance levels**
- 4. Standard Advertisement Directions**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The applicant has applied for signage to the John Lewis building as they consider Vicar Lane presents a significant visual barrier to The John Lewis (JLP) building and there is a requirement for the building to be signed in viewpoints from the Victoria Quarter and in longer views from the Headrow looking eastward. The applicant considers that the JLP building will be less focal within the city in comparison to Briggate and Trinity and consequently requires some signage treatment to deal with longer views.
- 1.2 The John Lewis and Victoria Gate developments will be a high profile development in the city. The proposed signage would have a visual impact on the appearance of the JLP building which members have considered in some detail as part of previous planning applications and it is considered appropriate for the signage applications to be determined by Plans Panel in this case.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site is the John Lewis Department Store building (JLP) which is currently under construction. The building is 5 floors (plus basement servicing area and active roof level) and forms a key element of the Phase 1 of the Victoria Gate development at it's eastern end. The approved design has produced an iconic and visually striking building, which has its own distinctive identity whilst referencing the contextual historical and architectural detailing of nearby City Centre areas and buildings. The site within the context of the adjacent City Centre Conservation Area to the west (Harewood Street and Sydney Street carry this designation) and close to the Grade I listed Kirkgate Market, Grade II listed Eastgate Roundabout and a number of Grade II Listed buildings at 1 Eastgate, Buckley House/Unity House, The Wray Buildings along the eastern edge of Vicar Lane and the Victoria Quarter. Plans Panel members have visited the site on a number of occasions.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 16/00173/ADV – Eight illuminated signs
- 3.2 This application proposes a series of eight illuminated letter signs, each denoting the John Lewis logo with varying dimensions ranging between 750mm x 6.5 metres to 1.5m x 6.5 metres, each located at various points around the exterior of the John Lewis building. Two of the eight illuminated signs are proposed to be located to the northern elevation of the John Lewis building within the Victoria Gate mall above each of the two entrances from the arcade into JLP. The majority of the signs are proposed as featuring white illuminated faces with a metallic finish to their sides, however two of the signs proposed to the exterior of the building feature grey faces with white returns and these two variant signs are intended to demarcate entrances into the store at ground floor level.
- 3.3 16/00176/ADV – One illuminated rooftop sign
- 3.4 This application proposes a John Lewis logo sign comprising individual letters, with a maximum letter height of 2 metres and overall height (including supporting structure) of 2.5 metres above the parapet line of the rooftop restaurant on JLP, facing west towards Vicar Lane across Sydney Street. Each individual letter would be supported on a mirror polished pole support, with between 1-2 poles attached to each individual letter. The sign is proposed be located towards the south western corner of the JLP building roof , atop the rooftop restaurant element.

3.5 16/00177/ADV -One illuminated projecting sign

3.6 This application proposes one illuminated projecting blade sign to the Eastgate elevation of the John Lewis building. The sign would be of bespoke design and unique to the Leeds store, comprising a vertically orientated asymmetrical rectangle, 6.75 metres tall to a maximum 1.5 metres in width with a mirrored finish to its background faces and an illuminated instance of the John Lewis logo. The sign would be located to the Eastgate façade of the John Lewis building between floors 4 & 5.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 11/01100/OT – Major redevelopment, including demolition, involving mixed use to provide retail stores, restaurants, bars and offices (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and B1 Use Classes), gym (D2 Use Class), medical centre, crèche, multi-faith prayer room (D1 Use Classes), changing places toilet facilities, with new squares and public realm, landscaping, car parking and associated highway works, at the Eastgate And Harewood Quarter, Leeds, LS2 . This application was approved on 6 September 2011

4.2 Approval was granted on 9 January 2014 for a reserved matters application for Plot HQ1 (to be occupied by John Lewis), under planning reference 13/02969/RM.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

5.1 An initial outline of signage proposals for the John Lewis building was put to officers in October 2015. An initial feedback meeting on the proposal took place on 04.11.2015 and a second meeting between officers to understand the evolution of the design of signage took place on 15.12.2015. The family of three applications was submitted on 18.01.2016.

5.2 Application 16/00176/ADV originally proposed a John Lewis logo sign to the dimensions of 2.5 metres in height, 10.7 metres in width attached to a triangular, mirror finished support frame with the overall height of the signage achieving 3.2 metres above the roof level. Officers advised the applicant that there were significant concerns regarding the scale of signage and how the support structure associated with the sign would be read in key views. Revised plans detailing the form of signage detailed in para. 3.2 of this report were received on 08.03.2016. The received comments of Leeds Civic Trust (see para 8.0 of this report) were submitted on the basis of the superseded rooftop signage arrangement and not the finalized iteration of the rooftop sign as is now proposed for consideration by members.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.2 Paragraph 67 of the NPPF states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

6.3 **Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district.

6.4 Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design. Development should protect and enhance locally important buildings, skylines and views.

6.5 Policy P11: The historic environment, consisting of archaeological remains, historic buildings, townscapes and landscapes, including locally significant undesignated assets and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity:

6.6 **Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review) Policies :**

.Relevant policies include:

6.7 BD8: All signs must be well designed and sensitively located within the street scene. They should be carefully related to the character, scale and architectural features of the building on which they are placed.

6.8 BD9: All signs within or adjoining Conservation Areas should preserve/enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.9 GP5: Proposals should resolve detailed planning considerations including design and safety.

6.10 **Leeds City Council Advertisement Design Guide**

6.11 The Leeds City Council Advertisement design guide provides supplementary planning guidance on where advertising would and would not generally be acceptable, encourages design excellence, innovative ways of advertising and high standards of maintenance.

7.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 Highways

7.2 Highways officers were consulted on all three proposals on 14 January 2015. Responses were received on 27 January 2016 advising that the illumination of externally placed signage must be no more than 600cdm^{-2} when the surface area of a sign is up to 10 sq metres and 300cdm^{-2} if the surface area of the sign exceeds 10 sq metres.

7.3 Should members be minded to approve the applications, it is recommended that the above technical restrictions on luminance be controlled by condition.

8.1 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

8.1 One letter of objection has been received from Leeds Civic Trust (LCT) summarised as follows:

- The JLP building design is distinctive and will undoubtedly be associated with JLP
- Such signage has not been required in Birmingham
- Application 16/00173/ADV seems acceptable but needs to be considered alongside potential signs for the Multi Storey Car Park and the Victoria Gate Arcade shops
- However a strong objection is raised to the rooftop and Eastgate Blade signs
- LCT consider the rooftop sign will provide an alien element in the wider townscape, downgrade the design of the building and will be visible from many approaches to the site.

9.0 ISSUES

9.1 Highway Safety

9.2 Illumination of signage is part of the commercial character of the City Centre environment and in principle is unlikely to be seen as alien and seen as a distraction to highway uses. As noted in para.7.0 above, subject to controls on the face luminance of the signage, there are not considered to be issues of public safety arising from any aspect of the proposed signage.

9.3 Visual Amenity

9.4 The series of eight illuminated building signs are considered to be of an appropriate scale and would be expected features, commensurate with a large retail store within the commercial environment of the City Centre. The facades of the JLP building are very wide and the building is of significant scale and height. As such, it is considered the lower levels of signage proposed within application 16/00173/ADV are individually of an appropriate scale such as to not appear dominating on the building façade and are to be distributed across each elevation such as to avoid visual clutter or an over proliferation of signs at any one point around the building's exterior. By virtue of the building's intricate external diagrid cladding there are challenges in terms of fitting the signage and its associate framework to the building. To ensure the signage does not appear clumsily applied to the facade, it is proposed that the precise details of all signage fixtures and support structures, including colour finish details and samples be made available to officers in advance of installation and it is proposed to members that this matter be controlled by planning condition.

9.5 The proposed blade sign to the Eastgate façade has been designed to work with the diagrid patterning of the host building. The sign is to have a mirror finish surface to allow it to pick up reflections from the host building's diagrid cladding and in its shape is considered to reflect the angles of the diagrid patterning. Within the mirror finish would sit individual letters in white, edged in dark grey. The illumination will be

limited to these letters only. Although the external façades of the building are highly and intricately detailed, the blade sign would be located to what is considered the least detailed area of the Eastgate elevation, on a vertical run of cladding which features neither terracotta panelling or glazing. The blade sign would not be located close to other instances of signage and it would not cut across the diagonal angles of each diagrid panel. Therefore it is considered the blade sign will reside comfortably on this part of the façade and not appear over dominant or out of character with the appearance of the host building or wider street scene of Eastgate and in longer views eastwards from The Headrow, within a location where there are other examples of banner signage applied to buildings where the length of building frontage is considered wide enough to accommodate such a form of signage.

9.6 The proposed rooftop sign is intended for the purpose of advertising the location of the JLP building in eastbound views across Vicar Lane from the Victoria Quarter. Following concerns by officers regarding the scale and location of this element of the three proposals, the applicant has amended the design to remove what was considered to be a very utilitarian but ultimately unsympathetic 'A' frame support structure from the rear of the sign. The applicant has now revised the design of this sign and proposed a series of thin form support poles applied to the base of each letter on which the letters will stand. It is considered that this revised arrangement (coupled with a reduction in the overall scale and height of each individual letter now proposed) will result in a neater and more visually appropriate form of signage than was originally proposed. Following the submission of additional information by the applicant, it is considered the applicant has demonstrated that the side and rear of the sign is generally obscured by the car park and plant screen / staircore projections at roof level on the JLP building and that the sign will be sufficiently set away from the JLP building's southern elevation, in order to avoid being read in views from the outdoor area of Kirkgate Market.

9.7 From the principle viewpoint of the sign (looking eastwards from Vicar Lane) it is considered the sign will appear in-keeping as part of longer views of the JLP building across the roof of the Victoria Gate arcades.

9.8 Representations

9.9 As noted above, the three applications are the subject of an objection from Leeds Civic Trust. The comments received relate to the following concerns:

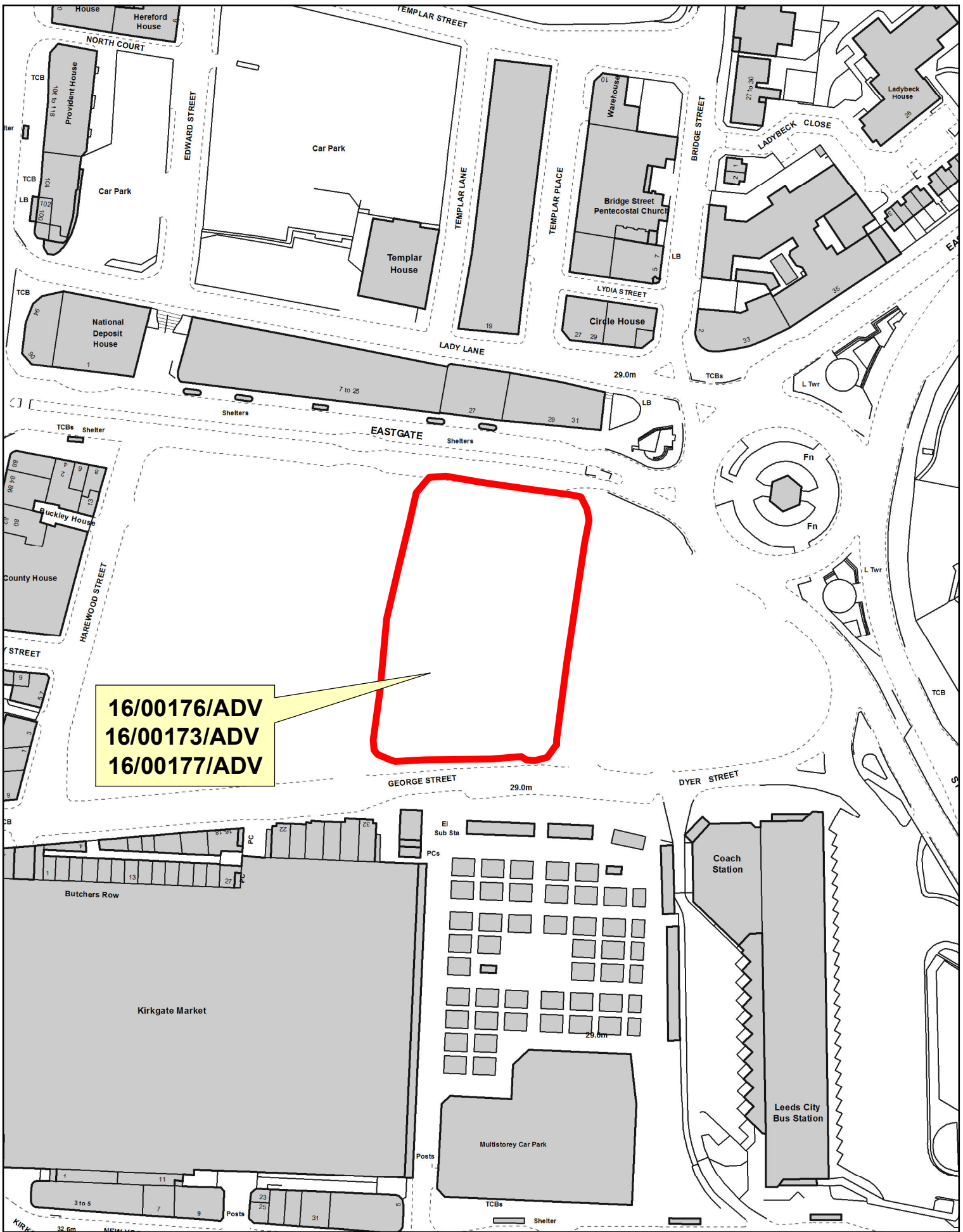
1. The rooftop sign is unnecessary on such a distinctive building where other large city centre anchor stores in the UK have not required similar forms of signage.
2. There is no opportunity to comment on signage concerning the car park or arcades but the signage across all three buildings must be understood as one composition.
3. The rooftop sign would be seen as an alien element and will be visible from many vantage points
4. The blade sign is unacceptable by virtue of being at odds with the design of the diagrid façade treatment of the JLP building.
5. The blade sign is superfluous as other instances of signage are proposed to the Eastgate Façade.

9.10 In response, proposals for Advertisement Consent can only be assessed against two criteria, visual amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst comments 1-3 above are noted, they are not directly related to the merits of the applications under appraisal and cannot be considered further. The revised plan set shown to members

as part of the plans panel meeting on 24.03.2016 will have indicative locations for signage related to the car park, however the finalised locations and detail of signage to the arcades is not yet available and consequently cannot be considered at this time. In any case, any future signage proposal for the car park and arcade shops can be assessed in the context of existing and approved signage.

- 9.11 Points 3&4 are addressed within the appraisal at section 9 of this report.
- 9.12 It is considered the signage proposed to be located to the corners of the building manifest at the lower levels of the building. The blade sign is proposed in order to allow for branding which is not obscured by the massing of the Victoria Gate Arcades in longer views from the northern head of Briggate and the southern edge of the Headrow which are distant views within which the lower level signage would not be prominent. For reasons noted in the above appraisal it is not considered the blade sign is detrimental to visual amenity as part of the overall composition, design and distribution of signage across the Eastgate elevation.

Background Papers: Application files – 16/00173/ADV, 16/00176/ADV, 16/00177/ADV, letter of objection from Leeds Civic Trust



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