



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

PLANS PANEL CITY CENTRE

Date: 1st April 2010

Subject: APPLICATIONS 10/00339/LI AND 10/00756/ADV – Erection of banner signs and other signage to front and side elevations of Leeds City Museum.

APPLICANT

Leeds City Council Museums
and Galleries

DATE VALID

16th February 2010

TARGET DATE

13th April 2010

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION:

10/00339/LI

APPROVE the application in principle and **REFER** the application to the Secretary of State as it is a listed building application by the City Council for a Grade II* listed building which is in its ownership. In the event of the Secretary of State not wishing to intervene, Members are further recommended to **DELEGATE** final approval to the Chief Planning Officer subject to the conditions specified (and any others which he might consider appropriate)

10/00756/ADV

Approve advertisement consent subject to the conditions outlined below (and such other conditions as the Chief Planning Officer may consider appropriate)

Conditions

10/00339/LI

1. Time period of consent
2. Prior to the commencement of the erection of the signage hereby approved details, to include the submission of materials in the construction of the signs and the supporting fixtures and fittings of:

- the vertical banners to either side of the main entrance
- the stove enameled bronze signage
- the framing of the 2 no. removable signage frames

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These items shall all be constructed in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity as these signs are attached to or in the setting of a Grade II* listed building.

Reasons for approval: The application is considered to comply with policies N15, N17, BD8, CC5 of the UDP Review, as well as guidance contained within PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and PPG19 (Outdoor Advertisement Control) and, having regard to all other material considerations is considered to be acceptable.

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Also subject to the standard advertising conditions:

- Maintenance of the advertisement site in a clean and tidy condition
- Any structures maintained as safe
- Removal of advertisements to be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority
- Advertisements to be displayed with the site owners consent.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The extensive renovation and alteration works to convert the Leeds Institute building into use as the City Museum have been completed and the museum has been open for nearly 2 years. L.C.C. Museums and Galleries wish to erect external signs to achieve 2 functions:

- (a) The permanent signing of the building itself and it's entrances and
- (b) To advertise various events and exhibitions which are to take place at the museum (these signs need to be of an easily replaceable design since they will be changed every time the exhibition changes).

Given the previous history of attempting to locate banners on this building, which are referred to in the relevant section below, a national signage company have been employed

to provide a comprehensive signage strategy in order to achieve the above objectives and this has resulted in the package which is described in detail below.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

The proposal is to erect a number of signs on the building and the immediately surrounding railings and stone walls and these are set out below:

1. 2 no. banner signs, one to be located on each of the pilasters to either side of the main entrance facing Millennium Square. Each sign would comprise a matt PVC material and be attached to a simple horizontal fixing rail to top and bottom (stove enameled bronze colour) and be an equal distance in from the side edges of the pilasters. The brackets are of a simple design which would align with the horizontal stone coursing and allow the banners to be slid in to place which is not possible once a curve is introduced. An adjustable tensioning screw would be discreetly located at the top of each banner and fixed to the wall using brackets which would be obscured from view by the banner itself. These would enable the banner to be tightened flat approximately 40mm from the wall and prevent them from being disturbed by the wind. The banner material would be matt finished PVC rather than the less attractive gloss finish. The applicant has provided a series of precedent images of schemes carried out by the project designers including The National Gallery, The Natural History Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. These images will be shown as part of the panel presentation.

The other signs proposed on the building are detailed below. None of these are to be illuminated and are to be constructed of metal with a stove enameled bronze finish and white writing:

2. Cookridge St (front elevation)

- An opening times sign (0.3m x 0.2m) to be located on the stone pillar between the 2 main entrance doors to the Millennium Sq entrance
- A menu board (0.3m x 0.5m) adjacent the café entrance.
- A combined opening times and poster panel (1.1m x 1.6m) situated on the retaining wall in front of the café terrace at back edge of foot path.

3. Vernon St (north side elevation)

- A sign to read Leeds City Museum (2m x 3.7m) located in a blank brick panel towards the Cookridge St end of the building - required as there is no indication of the importance or use of the building when approaching from the north.
- A disabled and groups entrance sign (0.5m x 0.4m) on a stone pedestal adjacent this entrance.
- A combined opening times and poster panel (1.1m x 1.6m) situated on the railings near the front corner of the building.

The signage company considered further sites and locations in addition to the above following the concerns raised by Panel on the previous application. The alternatives considered included those set out below but were rejected for the following reasons:

- Large advertisements on the footway in front of the building/Millennium Square: rejected due to the performance and event use requirements for Millennium Square, the safeguarding of Cookridge Street for emergency access and would intrude upon views of the front of the building.
- Signs suspended above the doorway: rejected as this would obscure the decorative relief work above the entrance, costs of making bespoke signs to fit the fanlight and would be of an inadequate size on its own to adequately promote the museum

information.

- Free standing moveable signage near the café terrace: rejected as visibility from all parts of the square is restricted, adds to street clutter, and this type of signage is open to vandalism.
- On the stone pedestal at the lower end of the access ramp: Adds to street clutter, conflicts with the architectural symmetry of the building. Could be subject to high cross winds.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

The Leeds Institute building is an imposing 3-storey Victorian Building constructed of local grit stone in a classical proportions and style and was designed by Cuthbert Brodrick as the Institute of Science and Art. In 1949 it was converted to use as a theatre and has now been converted to the Leeds city Museum.

The building is bounded to the east by the Leeds College of Art, to the north by Vernon Street and the Leeds College of Technology beyond, to the south by Rossington Street and faces Millennium Square to the west.

Millennium square is a public space bounded by a mixture of cultural, office and leisure uses with some small scale residential use. It is a focus for cultural and entertainment events in the city.

The Leeds Institute building is Grade II * Listed and is located within the boundaries of the City Centre Conservation Area. There are a number of other listed buildings within the vicinity of the site – The College of Art, Thoresby House, Electric Press, Brodrick's Building and the Civic Hall.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

1. Listed building consent and planning permission granted for alteration works to convert the building to a museum in 2005 (ref 20/161/05/LI & 20/163/05/FU)

2. Applications for Listed Building and Advertisement consent were withdrawn after having been previously presented to City Centre Plans Panel in March 2008. (07/06383/LI & 07/06382/ADV). Minutes of this Panel are attached to the end of this report for reference. These were for 2 no. banners only to be erected to the pilasters to either side of the main entrance measuring 6m x 1.2m and held on to the building by visible metal supports and fixing plates and brackets.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

These applications were the subject of a considerable amount of negotiation subsequent to the original March 2008 consideration at Panel. Officers have discussed this proposal with English heritage and the former LCC Libraries, Arts and Heritage.

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

None received.

7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE:

Statutory:

Listed Building application – 10/00339/LI

English Heritage: No objections – (EH were involved in further negotiations prior to these applications being submitted). State that whilst they previously had concerns about the introduction of the banner signage on the main elevation they are now satisfied that a case has been made and that the revised scheme is a well considered and justified proposal that

will provide signage of an appropriately high standard that respects the architectural quality of this important listed building.

Advertisement Application – 10/00756/ADV - None received

Non-Statutory:

Listed Building application – 10/00339/LI - None received

Advertisement application - 10/00756/ADV

Highway Development Services: No objections

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

Development Plan:

UDP Review

The most relevant policies in the Council's Unitary Development Plan (Reviewed July 2006) are: N15 and N17 (Listed building character), BD8 (signage impact), CC5 (City centre conservation area character).

Supplementary Planning Document:

Advertising Design Guide (adopted November 2006).

National Planning Guidance:

PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment).

PPG19 (Outdoor Advertisement Control).

9.0 MAIN ISSUES

1. Impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and conservation area.

10.0 APPRAISAL

Main entrance banners

There is undoubtedly a need for the museum to announce its presence and mark changing exhibitions with large scale signage visible from Millennium Square. Members have considered the banners previously and expressed concerns over aspects of that proposal, however, since that time further negotiations and consideration of the alternatives have been discussed with English heritage having been involved in this process. Further locations for signage have been considered, however, these have all proved to be deficient for one reason or another.

What is clear is that the pilasters remain the only area on the museum frontage which are considered suitable for the scale of signage and visibility desired by the operator whilst preserving its character and appearance. They provide the only large expanse of plain surface in contrast to the elaborate stonework dominating the rest of the façade. Therefore the signs would not obscure any significant detailing. The pilasters perform the important function of marking the main entrance and the banners will serve to reinforce this function.

The proposed signs would be inset sufficiently from the edges of the pilasters to be a subservient feature and retain sufficient views of the pilasters to preserve their architectural function. The fixings have been redesigned and are now of minimal visual impact with the discreet brackets being of a quality material, finish and a sympathetic colour. In addition the works are reversible with only repairs required to the bracket fixing points. The method of fixing will also create a clear edge and shadow gap to the pilasters behind, providing a neat, crisp edge in line with the clean edges of the pilasters. The intention is to use a matt, almost fabric like, pvc material and not a gloss finish which is considered unsympathetic to the high quality of the building.

This part of the conservation area is characterised by entertainment, institutional and office uses resulting in a vibrant street scene and a variety of signs advertising the uses around Millennium Square. It is considered that the proposed signage would be compatible with this vibrant character.

Ultimately, given these constraints, the quality of the design of the proposed banners and the precedents which exist on high profile internationally renowned cultural and arts establishments it has been considered that on balance the proposed design and location is not only the best achievable but will actually enhance the appearance of the building and it's functionality.

Cookridge St and Vernon St signage

In respect of the other signs these are all considered to be well designed , of high quality materials, in appropriate positions on the building and the surrounding infrastructure and correctly sized for each of these locations and the functions which they are expected to perform.

11.0 CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, therefore, it is considered that the proposed signs would preserve the character of the listed building and conservation area whilst allowing the promotion of museum events and the necessary information required to allow the Museum to make the public aware of important directional and functional information.

Background papers:

Application file papers ref 07/06383/LI & 07/06382/ADV.

136. Applications 07/06383/LI and 07/06382/ADV - Erection of banner signs to front of museum, Leeds City Museum, Leeds Institute Building Cookridge Street LS2

- [View the declarations of interest for item 136.](#)

Minutes:

Plans, photographs, graphics and a sample of the proposed banner material were displayed at the meeting

The Central Area Planning Manager presented the application which sought permission for two banner signs to be positioned one on each pilaster on either side of the main museum entrance, facing Millennium Square. The signs would be used to advertise exhibitions and events at the museum. Details of the proposed fittings were provided and Members were informed that the banners would be tensioned to prevent them flapping in adverse weather conditions

As the building was Grade II* Listed, any resolution to approve would require referral to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for determination

Members were informed of the objections raised to the proposals by English Heritage

The Panel commented on the following matters:

- that any advertising should be solely for the museum to advertise exhibitions and not for any commercial advertising
- that a condition should be included to limit display of the banners to advertising new exhibitions and events only
- the need to use rust resistant bolts to secure the fittings and that care must be taken not to damage the stone blocks
- that detailed images of the fittings without the banners should be provided

- that the museum was a prestigious listed building which had been restored and developed at great expense and that the proposed plastic banners were neither suitable nor in keeping with a building of such high quality
- that some regard to the rounded fenestration should be given to any advertising on the main entrance
- the acceptance of the need for the museum to advertise events and the possibility of incorporating some free-standing advertising around the shop and café area
- concerns at the advertising around the Town Hall and the need for a debate to be opened up on this matter
- the possibility of utilising the stone pedestals and concerns that the new stonework had a concrete-like appearance compared to the weathered mill stone of the original building

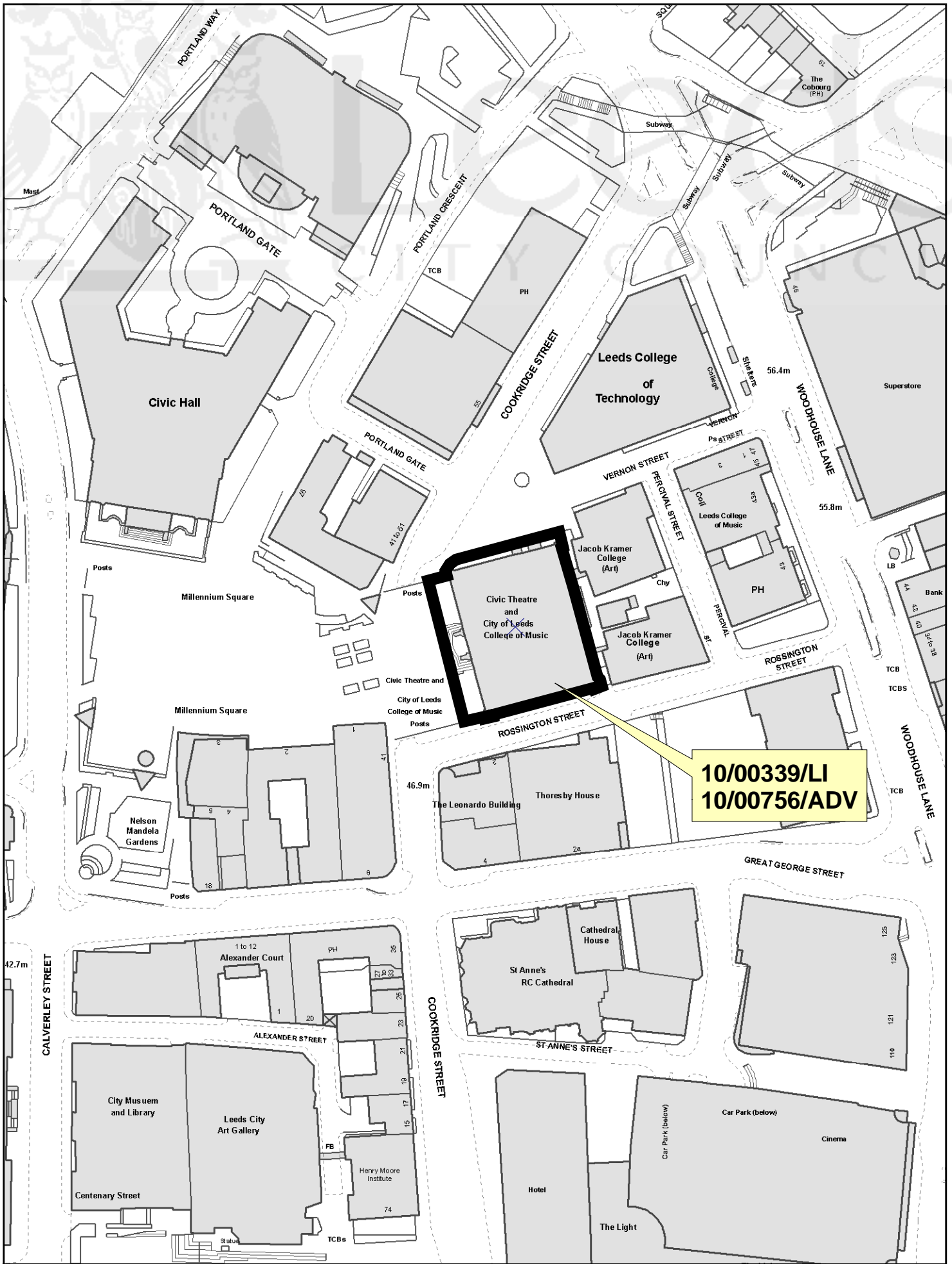
The Central Area Planning Manager informed Members that siting on the pedestals had been considered but had been rejected in favour of the proposed banner signs

Members were also reassured that the stonework pedestals supporting the lights at either side of the entrance were stone, but that a decision had been taken not to artificially weather this, but allow natural weathering to occur

As Members were unhappy with the proposals, the Central Area Planning Manager suggested further negotiations were held with the applicant

RESOLVED -

- (i) That determination of the applications be deferred to enable Officers to negotiate further regarding the type, design and siting of advertising for exhibitions to be held at the museum
- (ii) That the Chief Planning Officer be asked to raise the issue of the advertising banners outside the Town Hall with the Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer



10/00339/LI
10/00756/ADV

CITY CENTRE PANEL

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 Scale 1/1500

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