

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 21/01990/ADV		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Advertisement Consent - Provision of five external signs		
ADDRESS Tunbridge Wells Library Adult Education Centre Museum And Art Gallery Mount Pleasant Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent		
RECOMMENDATION to GRANT advertisement consent subject to conditions (please refer to section 11.0 of the report for full recommendation)		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is related to the delivery of the Tunbridge Wells Cultural Hub on a site allocated for this purpose within the Site Allocations Local Plan (July 2016). • The proposal would not result in harm to highway safety; • Owing to the design, scale, positioning and overall appearance of the advertisements they would not be harmful to amenity; • Other issues raised have been assessed and there are not any which would warrant refusal of the application or which cannot be satisfactorily controlled by condition. 		
INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL The following are considered to be material to the application: Contributions (to be secured through Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking): N/A Net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A Estimated average annual workplace salary spend in Borough through net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A The following are not considered to be material to the application: Estimated annual council tax benefit for Borough: N/A Estimated annual council tax benefit total: N/A Estimated annual business rates benefits for Borough: N/A		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is the applicant and freehold owner of land within the application site		
WARD Park	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL N/A	APPLICANT Tunbridge Wells Borough Council AGENT Edward Dunderdale
DECISION DUE DATE 04/08/21	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 06/07/21	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE Various
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):		

Whole site

21/01515/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Externally fixed/mounted electrical & security equipment and signage/wayfinding	Pending	
20/02298/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of 20/00154/LBC - Internal and external alterations including associated drainage and retention of external stairwell and new kiln room door; amendment to basement layout of AEC building; addition of metal IT cage to Museum building; minor change from door from infill extension to courtyard; demolition of one existing later addition wall to first floor of the AEC; minor changes to archive extension windows; creation of access between the archive extension and museum roof.	Granted	29/10/20
20/00253/FULL	Variation of Condition 2 of 19/00577/FULL - Internal and external alterations to the current permission including: amendments to the internal layout, retention of an existing lift and associated layout changes, plus changes to agreed external materials including the omission of zinc cladding and amendments to the brick specification	Granted	27/03/20
20/00154/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Variation of Condition 2 of 19/00614/LBC - Internal and external alterations to the current consent including: amendments to the internal layout, retention of an existing lift and associated layout changes, plus changes to agreed external materials including the omission of zinc cladding and amendments to the brick specification	Granted	27/03/20
19/00614/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Partial demolition of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library and removal of two huts to the rear of the site. Erection of extensions to the side and rear of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library to create a unified Cultural Hub. Associated internal and external alterations.	Granted	09/05/19
19/00577/FULL	Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) of 17/03640/FULL - Omission of proposed	Granted	09/05/19

	lantern above the Museum entrance; Removal of screen between existing Museum entrance and lending library; Removal of lightwell to the west elevation of the AEC building; Removal of stairwell to the south elevation of the AEC; Omission of Door DG.39 From AEC ground floor entrance; AEC Corridor Doors at ground, first and second floor level to be replaced instead of retained; New structural arrangement to café; addition of roof plant to AEC; Alterations to infill extension design; Amendments to external acoustic screen to roof plant area above archive extension		
17/03640/FULL	Proposal: Partial demolition of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library and removal of two huts to the rear of the site. Erection of extensions to the side and rear of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library to create a unified Cultural Hub	Granted	24/01/18
17/03642/LBC	Proposal: Listed Building Consent - Partial demolition of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library and removal of two huts to the rear of the site. Erection of extensions to the side and rear of the Adult Education Centre, Museum and Library to create a unified Cultural Hub. Associated internal and external alterations.	Granted	24/01/18

Previous Advertisement Consents

00/02296/ADV	Advertisement - non illuminated projecting banners (<i>Library and Museum</i>)	Granted	19/12/00
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MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 This application refers to part of the wider civic complex within Tunbridge Wells Town Centre. The application site is approximately 0.24ha in size and comprises the Adult Education Centre (AEC) and the library and museum building. Both of these are Grade II Listed, and the application site is situated within the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area. The whole site is currently closed as the Amelia Scott project is under construction pursuant to the earlier planning permissions/LBCs granted in 2018, 2019 and 2020. These have been implemented and the project has been largely completed externally.

- 1.02 The existing buildings on site comprise the three-storey AEC building and the two-storey library & museum building. Both the main buildings have basement areas. Two huts for use by the AEC formerly stood at the rear of the site but have been demolished as part of the implementation of the 2018 - 2020 planning permissions and listed building consents.
- 1.03 The library and museum were built in 1939, fitted out during WWII and finally completed in the early 1950s. External materials are largely brown brick with reconstituted stone dressings. Distinctive features of the building identified in the listing description are the stone coping and band at the top with the wording "LIBRARY AND MUSEUM"; the eight 30-pane sashes and central tall window incorporating a double door with lotus decoration and a frieze above; and the large well staircase. In the late 1960s, the bowed ground floor section at the rear was extended upwards to form a rear first floor reference library. This section has also been removed as part of the Amelia project.
- 1.04 The AEC (originally called the Technical Institute) is a red brick building on a stone plinth dating from 1902 and reflects the Art Nouveau style. Notable features include three immense stone dormer windows on the 2nd floor, the use of casement windows and three large bays on the first floor; and the frieze above the first floor.
- 1.05 Prior to redevelopment the AEC building and the two huts provided a range of classes along with offices, storage, WCs and a café. There were formerly parking bays on the southern side of the site and between the two huts.
- 1.06 The museum, library and registration services were housed in the existing library building (with services currently being temporarily being delivered from a Unit within the Royal Victoria Place). The ground floor hosted the main lending library along with WCs and offices/workroom. The reference library/local studies section, museum and art gallery were on the first floor, again with ancillary offices/storage. The building's basement included a staff room, storage areas, reserve book stock and archive material storage, along with a small kitchen.
- 1.07 To the south of the site is the Grade II listed Town Hall, Assembly Hall Theatre, police station and former Magistrates' Court. To the east is Monson House, a 1980s office block. To the west is Civic Way, a grassed/tree lined area dividing Civic Way from Mount Pleasant Road and the Grade II listed war memorial. North of the site is Monson Colonnade, Nos. 36-50 (evens) Monson Road and the Opera House, which are all Grade II listed

2.0 PROPOSAL

Background – previous permissions and LBCs

- 2.01 Application 17/03642/LBC granted listed building consent for works to facilitate a new Cultural Hub (TWCH) offering access to a range of public and other services for the area. The project has since been named 'The Amelia Scott', after Amelia Scott (1860 - 1952) who was a British social reformer, campaigner for women's suffrage and one of the first two women elected as Tunbridge Wells councillors. The supporting development plan policy documents still refer to the project as the 'Cultural Hub', however, this makes no difference to the planning considerations of the proposal.
- 2.02 The previously-granted permissions/LBC were to refurbish and renovate the existing museum and library building in Civic Way and the AEC on Monson Road, by incorporating extensions to bring the two buildings together and demolishing the two huts at the rear, which were argued to present accessibility issues and to be unfit for

purpose. The following services are to be incorporated in the new extended complex of buildings:

- Museum
- Library and Archive
- Adult Learning Education Centre
- Tourist Information Centre
- Gateway Services
- Birth/death Registration Services

2.04 Both buildings would maintain their respective entrances on to Civic Way and Monson Road.

2.05 The rationale behind the layout is to provide a ‘noisy’ wing on the north side and a ‘quiet’ wing to the south.

Current Advertisement Consent application

2.06 This application seeks Advertisement Consent for signage associated with the previously permitted extension and conversion of the buildings. The signage is also subject to a parallel Listed Building Consent application to be heard at the same Committee meeting.

- Addition of vertical aluminium powder coated signs to the west and north elevations of the library and to the east elevation of the two storey extension;
- Addition of an ‘exterior events window’ adjacent to the main doors to the former library. This would accommodate various A1/A2/A3 size posters advertising events at the facility. It would be made from powder coated stainless steel.
- Details of an aluminium horizontal freestanding sign outside the main door of the AEC is also included however this does not require LBC as it is not physically attached the listed building.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

Advert type and location	Dimensions
G-E01 (Exterior Flag Sign to west elevation of library/museum)	2.4m x 0.5m; projecting 150mm from the wall and positioned 3.7m from pavement level
G-E02 (Exterior Flag Sign to north elevation of library/museum)	2.4m x 0.5m; projecting 150mm from the wall and positioned 4.4m from pavement level
G-E03 (Exterior Flag Sign to east elevation, above service entrance)	2.4m x 0.5m; projecting 150mm from the wall and positioned 3.2m from pavement level
G-E04 (Exterior events window to be sited next to the former library/museum door)	1.49m x 0.74m; positioned 1.4m from the highest part of the adjacent pavement
G-E05 (Freestanding sign on pavement outside north elevation of Adult Education Centre)	2.4m x 0.5m; positioned 0.5m from the ground

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- The Tunbridge Wells Library, Museum & Art Gallery and Adult Education Centre buildings are both Grade II listed (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*)
- Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*)

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Site Allocations Local Plan Adopted 2016

Policy AL/STR 1: Limits to Built Development

Policy AL/RTW 2A: Civic Complex/Crescent Road Area of Change

Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy 2010

Core Policy 4: Environment

Core Policy 9: Development in Tunbridge Wells

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006

Policy EN1: Development Control Criteria

Policy EN5: Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents

Civic Development Planning Framework

Other documents:

Tunbridge Wells Cultural Strategy 2014-24

Draft Local Plan – only limited weight can be given to this as it has not been formally submitted for examination, following conclusion of the Regulation 19 consultation.

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

6.01 Site notices were displayed around the application site on 18 June 2021.

6.02 No comments have been received from members of the public.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Principal Conservation Officer

7.01 **(28/05/21 – comments on parallel LBC application)** - have reviewed the application drawings and supporting documents and am familiar with the site.

- Signage - this has been discussed at pre-application meetings and has been agreed as acceptable.

7.02 **(05/07/21)** – no comment

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS
N/A

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 9.01 2100 Rev G
2101 Rev G
2102 Rev F
2103 Rev F
2104 Rev F
Location Plan
Advert drawings G-E01 to G-E05 Rev 2

10.0 APPRAISAL

- 10.01 S.336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) includes within the definition of 'advertisement' *'any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction'*. The proposed signage falls within this definition.
- 10.02 The Advertisement Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, though account is taken of development plan policies as material considerations, they alone cannot be determinative.
- 10.03 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that; *'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'*

Amenity

- 10.04 The signage is limited in its scale and impact. It is intended to draw attention to a public building in a town centre and is not intended for commercial advertisement purposes. The signage would not dominate the appearance of the building and is of an appropriate scale. It would not cut across key architectural features and whilst designed to be visible from afar, it would not dominate the streetscene. No objections are raised by the Principal Conservation Officer regarding the impact on the significance and character of the listed building and there would be no impact on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings. On this basis, the proposal is not considered harmful to amenity.

Impact on public safety

- 10.01 It is not considered the proposed adverts would be confusing to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic for both drivers and pedestrians in the area; the adverts would be set back from the highway and are typical of the kind of adverts found in this town centre area. The proposal is therefore not considered to result in any significant harm to public safety.

- 11.0 RECOMMENDATION** – GRANT subject to the following conditions;

CONDITIONS

- (1) No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

- (2) No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to -

- (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
- (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
- (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Reason: In the interests of public safety.

- (3) Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

- (4) Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

Reason: In the interests of public safety.

- (5) Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and visual amenity.

- (6) This consent shall expire 5 years from the date of this notice or when the business occupying the premises changes, whichever is the sooner, whereupon the signage shall be removed and any damage repaired unless further consent to display has been given by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and because planning legislation limits grants of Advertisement Consent to a five year period.

- (7) The advertisement(s) shall not be illuminated.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity / public safety and because the application has not been made for illuminated advertisements

- (8) The advertisements hereby permitted shall be displayed in accordance with the following approved plans:

2100 Rev G
2101 Rev G
2102 Rev F
2103 Rev F
2104 Rev F
Location Plan

Advert drawings G-E01 to G-E05 Rev 2

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.

Case Officer: Richard Hazelgrove

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.