

Our Ref: 23096/CJ/EC
Your Ref: PP-1269069
Email: [REDACTED]
Date: 20 December 2023

Planning Services,
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council,
Town Hall,
Tunbridge Wells,
TN1 1RS

Dear Planning,

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT AND CONSENT TO DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS 96 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, TUNBRIDGE WELLS TN1 1RT

Please see the enclosed application for advertisement and listed building consent for the display of advertisements on behalf of SIPP Holdings, a franchisee trading as Burger King, at 96 Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RT.

Recent permissions granted at the site (ref: 23/02594/FULL and 23/02595/LBC) will facilitate the occupation of the building as a restaurant by SIPP Holdings, a franchisee trading as Burger King. The proposed signage would replace that which was existing from the previous occupier of the site, and will allow Burger King to appropriately market their presence when the restaurant opens as a new business in the area.

The application has been submitted online via Planning Portal and the requisite planning fee of [REDACTED] (plus admin fee) has been paid online upon submission.

According with national and local validation requirements, the application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning Application Form and Site Ownership Certificates prepared by Firstplan;
- Site Location Plan;
- Existing and Proposed Drawings and Elevations including signage details by L & G Signs; and
- This Letter, which provides the Planning Statement, Heritage Statement and Design & Access Statement.

Site Description and Background Information

The application relates to 96 Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RT, which is currently occupied by WH Smith, but is soon to become vacant. The application building is an end of terrace unit, which forms part of the wider complex of buildings that form the Grade II listed former Opera House and Colonnade.

The site (in red) and its immediate context are demonstrated in Figure 1. below. It is situated on the eastern side of Mount Pleasant Road and includes a frontage onto Newton Road to the north.

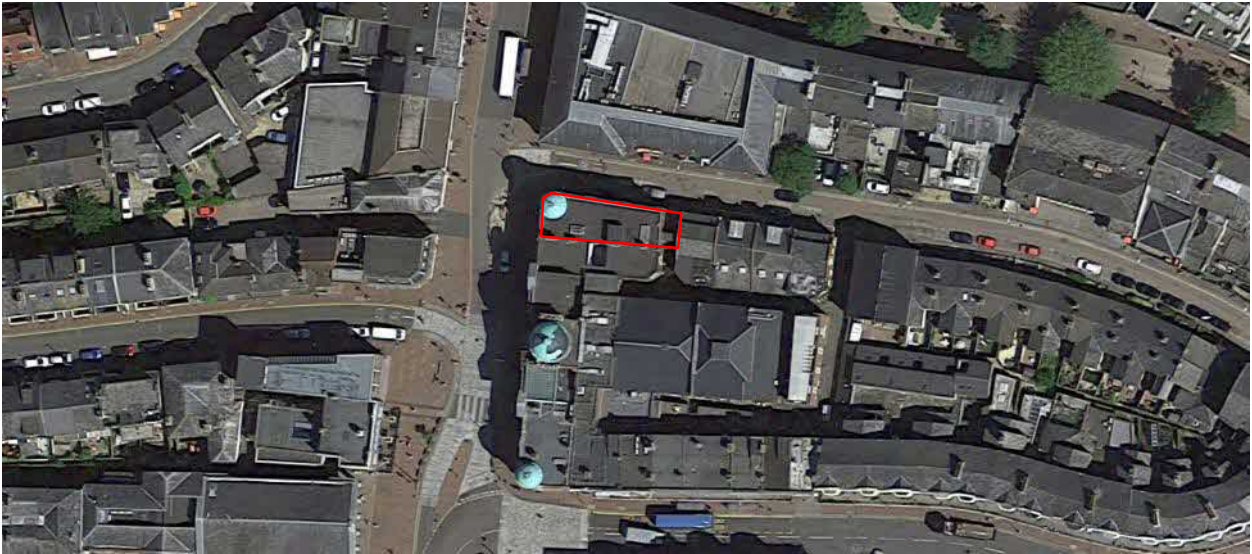


Figure 1. Aerial View of Application Site

Photographs of the building's street frontages are provided at Figure 2.



Mount Pleasant Frontage



Newton Road Frontage

Figure 2. Street Frontages

At the rear of the site is a shared service yard, which includes plant equipment, loose bins and other storage associated with the unit and other units in the immediate vicinity.

The wider building is occupied by range of commercial uses. A public house occupies the former Opera House, and the retail parade is occupied by a range of Class E operators. On the opposite flank of the building is a vacant restaurant unit, which was previously occupied by Prezzo.

Immediately north of the site it Metro Bank with commercial floorspace above. Immediately to the rear is a vacant nightclub, which was last occupied as MooMoo.

The listing description is as follows:

“Theatre incorporating shops on three sides. Built in 1902 to the designs of John Briggs. Symmetrical composition in Neo-georgian style with a Baroque centrepiece. Built of red brick with ashlar dressings with central copper dome and smaller domes at the sides. Three storeys, 23 windows in all to principal elevation. The centre 9 bays form the major composition with flanking six bay wings. Central dome with oculus above broken pediment supported on paired Ionic pilasters. Central curved balcony with round-headed arch and three round-headed openings with french windows. Three flanking bays have oculi with carved figures above second floor and central section terminates with a pediment and double pilasters. Twelve-pane sashes throughout on second floor and fifteen-pane sashes to first floor. The outer ends of the wings end in domes. Outer bays have baroque doorways to the ground floor set against banded rustication. Shops on ground floor. INTERIOR. Foyer has dado panelling, two fireplaces with pilasters, swags and console brackets and two arches with Ionic piers. Main staircase, probably altered after 1923, leads to bar which has mahogany bar fitment with round-headed arch with carved shell motif and painting of C18 revellers and painted fireplace. The auditorium has two slightly curved balconies of six and eight rows each with straight slips running to ranges of superimposed boxes, four on each side. The upper boxes have gryphons at the head of each subdividing pilaster. The Dress Circle retains a glazed screen with lily decoration and the seating probably dates from the cinema conversion of 1923. The Gallery retains original tip up seating with lily motif. The Proscenium is rectangular with elaborately scrolled brackets in the corners and a curved pedimental table above the centre flanked by reclining figures personifying Music and Drama. The main ceiling is in the form of a panelled saucer dome set within a richly moulded rectangular frame. Flytower retains scenery winch and metal hooks”.

Whilst the application unit is not referred to within the description, the shops (including no. 96) are included within the address in the listing. The site is also located within the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area.

In terms of planning history, a review of the online records held by Tunbridge Wells has been undertaken and is summarised at Table 1 below.

Reference	Decision	Outcome
76/00187	Listed Building Consent - Staircase between ground and first floors.	Approved
86/00312/ADV	Advertisement - Illuminated fascia lettering and projecting sign.	Approved
87/01440/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Replacement front entrance door.	Approved
88/01992/FUL	Installation of key payment credit vending machine	Approved
88/01993/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Installation of key payment credit vending machine	Approved
92/00214/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Internal alterations for fire safety improvements	Approved
98/00877/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Replacements shopfronts, new fire exit door to the rear passage and internal alterations	Approved


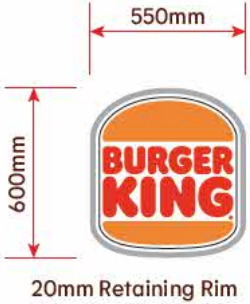

98/00874/FUL	Replacement shopfronts plus new fire exit door to rear passage	Approved
98/00881/ADV	Advertisement - non illuminated fascia sign	Approved
98/00882/LBC	Listed Building Consent - non illuminated fascia sign	Approved
04/01527/LBC	Listed Building Consent - Bricking up of redundant lower ground floor window openings; installation of vents to lower ground floor air handling unit	Approved
22/01720/FULL	Proposed alterations to the existing building including the installation of new openings and doors to the Newton Road elevation and a new internal partition	Approved
22/01721/LBC	Listed Building Consent: Proposed alterations to the existing building including the installation of new openings and doors to the Newton Road elevation and a new internal partition	Approved

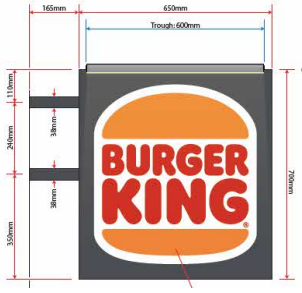
Table 1. Planning History Summary

Application Proposals

This application relates to the installation of 5x externally illuminated fascia signs and 1 externally illuminated projecting sign. 1x fascia sign will be located on the Mount Pleasant Road elevation, 1x on the corner and 3x will be located on the Newton Road elevation.

Advertisement consent is sought for the following adverts. Details of the proposals are included below:

	<p>2x Main fascia letter signs "BURGER KING". 4177mm wide and 500mm tall. Acrylic faces with aluminium return mounted on back panel. Externally illuminated trough lighting.</p>
	<p>3x bun logos. 550mm wide and 600mm tall. Fully moulded acrylic logo. To be housed in a painted aluminium frame. Externally illuminated trough lighting.</p>
	<p>1x above door "Flame Grilling Since 1954" vinyl. To flood above door window. Non-illuminated opaque white vinyl on grey background.</p>

	<p>1x projecting sign on Mount Pleasant Road elevation. 650mm wide and 700mm tall. Mild steel frame clad with aluminium panels Externally illuminated trough lighting.</p>
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Planning Policy Summary

Consideration has been given to the following policy documents and policies:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy 2010
 - Core Policy 5 – Sustainable Design and Construction
 - Core Policy 9 – Development in Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006
 - Policy EN5 - Development within, or affecting the character of a Conservation Area
 - Policy EN6 - Shopfronts
 - Policy EN8 - Outdoor Lighting

Supporting Planning Policy

Consideration has also been given to the following guidance documents:

- Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area Appraisal

Planning and Heritage Assessment

The planning considerations arising from the proposals are the impact on the identified heritage assets, including design, and the impact on surrounding amenities. These considerations are addressed in turn below.

Design and Heritage Considerations

Adopted national and local planning policy requires that development proposals preserve or enhance the character and those aspects that make a positive contribution to the significance of heritage assets. This is directly connected with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which establishes a statutory duty for Local Planning Authorities.

The application site forms part of a wider Grade II listed building, designed by John Briggs, located within the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area as well as the Calverley Road and Royal Victoria Place Special Identity Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the Opera House as one of three of a key building group in the town centre, described as an iconic focal point.

Whilst the unit itself forming part of this application is not explicitly referred to in the Conservation Area Appraisal, it is considered to make a positive contribution. Although the ground floor units of the wider listed building have been altered through time, the building retains much of its architectural integrity overall including the original opera house portions and its equipment which contributes to its value and positive contribution.

The rear façade in comparison is considered to hold limited value and contribution to the Conservation Area.

Assessment of Impact

The proposal is for the installation of fascia signage and a projecting sign would be externally illuminated, similar to other nearby commercial premises. The signs would announce the presence of the business on this corner unit.

Newton Road currently comprises vinyl covered up windows in prominent blue. The proposals will open up the window bays nearest Mount Pleasant and provide an improvement and more open corner frontage. Similarly, the replacement grey vinyl to the back of house areas will be more muted than the current blue which is an overall improvement.

The current fascia signs comprise large flat panel signs, which are low quality. Individually formed letters and bun logos are therefore considered a better solution.

The signs would be discreet and provide an uncluttered appearance. They will not be overly prominent, and remain in proportion with the detailing of the building's frontage. The fixings will be minimal, and will therefore cause no significant impact to the building fabric. The proposed materials are high quality and will not be at odds with the overall appearance of the listed building. The use of dark grey panelling and white lettering will result in a muted and sympathetic solution to signage.

Overall, the quantity and form, method of illumination is consistent with what was approved at Prezzo on the other flank of the former Opera House block.

It is therefore considered that the Council should take a positive assessment of the proposed replacement signage. The overall quantum of signage would increase, but as the proposals have been designed as a whole package would unify the two elevations. Furthermore, the use of high-quality materials would also reduce the visual impact of street clutter and would not detract from the appearance of the listed building. This scheme provides an appropriate signage solution that effectively markets the presence of the restaurant, whilst preserving the building's character. The works will not affect any original parts of the building or obscure any original features, thus preserving its principal significance that stems from its aesthetic quality and its group value with the wider former Opera House listing.

In light of the above, the proposed are considered to be in accordance with adopted Local Policies, in that they:

- Are of a high standard of design;
- Do not adversely affect the historic significance of buildings, and are sensitive to the character of an area through size and siting, especially those areas of historic significance; and
- Do not contribute to an unsightly proliferation or clutter of signage in the local area and detract from the amenity of the street scene; cause a physical obstruction to the public realm; and cause visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution into adjoining residential properties, and avoid flashing internal or external illumination.

The proposals are therefore in accordance with the NPPF and Tunbridge Wells policies 5, 9, EN5, EN6 and EN8.

Amenity and Public Safety Considerations

In terms of public safety and amenity the proposals will not result in any harm on the amenity of surrounding occupiers due to the discreet and slimline nature of the signage and subtle level of illumination.

The projecting sign will be securely fixed to the building façade (3.5m from ground) and will not impede any pedestrian or vehicle movements on the footpath or highway. In addition, the external illumination through trough lighting ensures that there would be no harmful glare to road users.

The signage is considered to be compatible with the surrounding area resulting in no harm to public or private amenity, in accordance with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF and adopted Tunbridge Wells planning policies. The proposals should be considered acceptable in this regard.

Conclusions

This application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of signage at 96 Mount Pleasant Road.

The proposed signage is consistent with paragraphs 197 and 203 of the NPPF and Policies 5, 9, EN5, EN6 and EN8 of Tunbridge Wells Local Plan as they fulfil the requirements of preserving or enhancing the character of the heritage assets.

In addition, the proposals comply with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF in that they will protect public amenity and highway safety, and incorporate high-quality design and materials within the public realm.

I therefore trust that the attached information is sufficient to facilitate the granting of permission for the proposed signage. However, should you have any further queries concerning the application please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



CHRIS PIRIS-JONES
Director