

CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB COMMITTEE	Date 2 APRIL 2019	Classification For General Release	
Report of Executive Director Growth Planning and Housing		Ward(s) involved West End	
Subject of Report	Regent Street, London		
Proposal	Display of non-illuminated suspended kinetic display measuring 45 m x 17 m above Regent Street, at junction of Glasshouse Street / Vigo Street / Regent Street for a temporary period from 14 May until 9 June 2019.		
Agent	Mr Jonny Schofield		
On behalf of	London Design Festival		
Registered Number	19/00477/ADV	Date amended/ completed	23 January 2019
Date Application Received	23 January 2019		
Historic Building Grade	2		
Conservation Area	Regent Street		

1. RECOMMENDATION

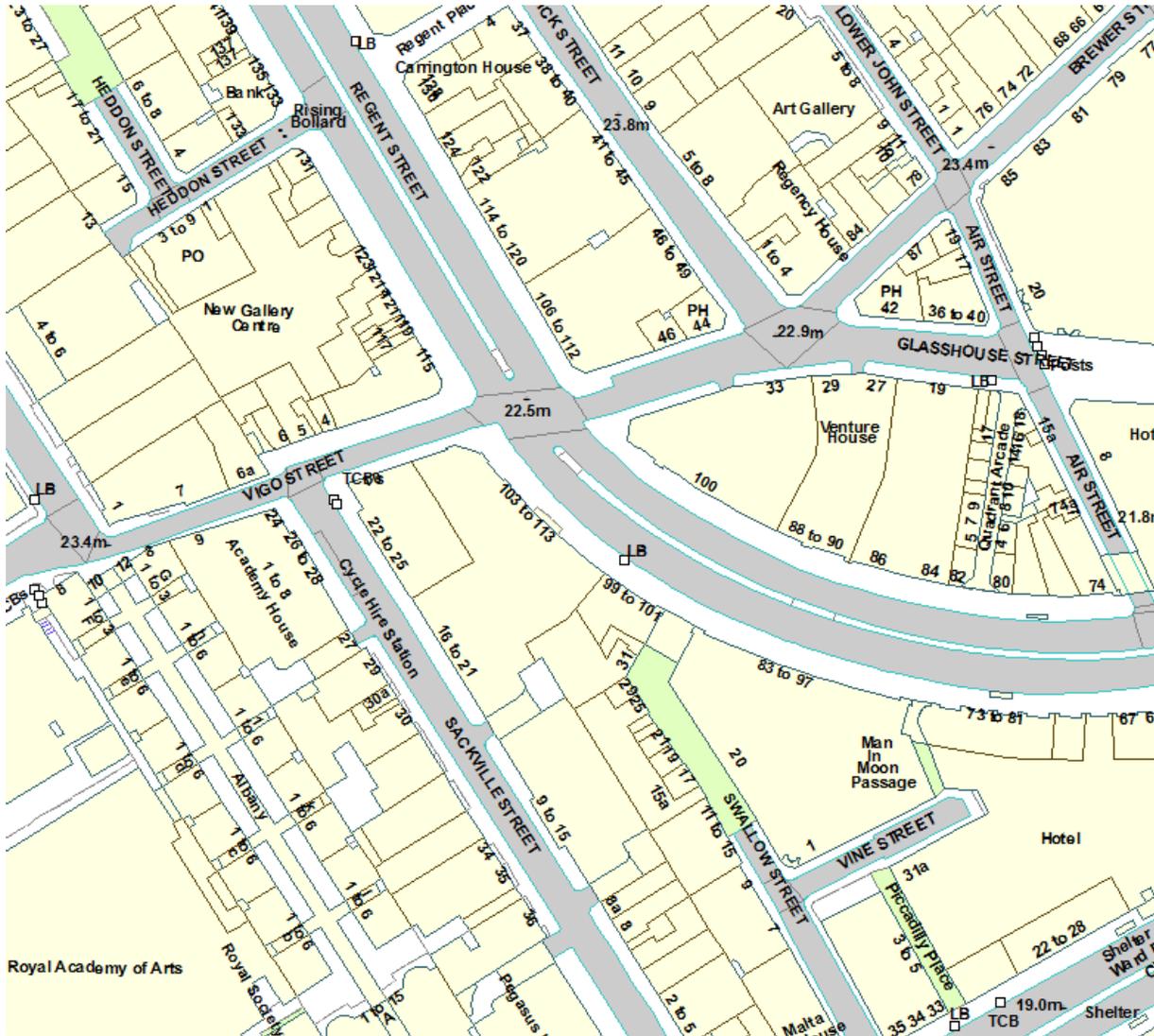
Refuse advertisement consent

2. SUMMARY

Regent Street is one of the most important historic streets in Westminster, and it is of national importance. It is a conservation area in its own right. It is also a highly commercial street and a balance needs to be struck between its commercial role and its heritage significance. The display of advertisements across the street, including banners and structures, should be on a limited, temporary basis so that for a large majority of the time the architectural splendour of Regent Street can be fully appreciated. It is also considered that any installation in Regent Street should relate to the street itself. Regent Street should not be used to display advertisements which have no relationship to the street.

The current application seeks consent for a temporary display linked to the launch of the London Design Festival in May. The festival itself takes place in September. Whilst this is a significant event, it is considered that its launch does not justify the installation of this large structure for three weeks in Regent Street. The structure is considered harmful to the character and appearance of the Regent Street Conservation Area and the settings of the listed buildings which line the street.

3. LOCATION PLAN



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4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Top – View looking North along Regent Street towards junction with Glasshouse Street and Vigo Street (left)

Bottom – View looking South along Regent Street. Glasshouse Street on left.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Soho Society
Residents Society Of Mayfair & St. James's
Mayfair Residents Group

No replies received

Highways Planning - Development Planning – No Objection provided the structure has a matt, non-reflective finish.

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes

6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 The Application Site

The proposed location is within the Central Activities Zone and the Regent Street Conservation Area, and is surrounded by grade 2 listed buildings in Regent Street.

6.2 Relevant History

Until recently only a few temporary consents have been granted for the display of adverts suspended across Regent Street, with the exception of Christmas decorations which have been approved each year. In 2006 an advertisement consent was granted, for a period of three years, for the display of temporary banners for three displays a year, lasting up to ten days at a time; that is a total of 30 days each year.

However, since then banner displays have been permitted for longer periods. In 2016 banners were allowed from:

1. 8th July 2016 and 31st August 2016
2. 23 April 2016 to 04 May 2016

A total of 67 days.

In 2017 banners were allowed:

- a. 21st June 2017 until the 23rd July 2017.
- b. 15th September 2017 until the 9th October 2017

A total of 58 days.

In 2018 banners were allowed:

1. 20 May 2018 to 30 September 2018

A total of 134 days.

7. THE PROPOSAL

This is a proposal by the Architecture Social Club on behalf of the London Design Festival. It is for a temporary display of a 55 m long kinetic tensile 'artwork' in relation to the launch of the 2019 Festival in May.

The proposed artwork is suspended from existing anchor points on the building facades, so there is no requirement for listed building consent for the fixings.

All cables, and decoration extents, including anticipated deflections, will be above the minimum highway clearance of 5.7 m. The artwork consists of a double curvature cable net structure that supports 407 individual pixels that are intended to move in the wind. The net is formed from 4 mm wire cable on a 550 x 1050 mm grid.

The pixels are 180 mm long and consist of a twisted aluminium stem with a concave wire mesh wind catcher at one end, and a convex one at the other end to create a propeller-like effect. The pixels are supported on a pivot that allows free rotation around the 4mm cable net.

8. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Townscape and Design

Regent Street is one of the most important historic streets in London, created for the Prince Regent by John Nash in the 1820's. South of Oxford Circus it is owned by the Crown Estate. It was redeveloped from the end of the 19th century until the 1920's and all of the buildings are now listed grade 2. It is also an important commercial street in the West End, and so it is important to establish a balance between the heritage of the street and its modern commercial status. The City Council and the Crown Estate have similar, longstanding, guidelines for the display of signs and the design of shopfronts in the street.

The display of advertisements across the street has a huge impact on the appearance of the street. Whilst adding colour and interest, such displays are highly prominent in street views, obscuring the strong architectural character of the buildings and of the street as whole.

It is considered that a careful balance has to be struck between the type and duration of displays across the street, and the need to allow people a full appreciation of the street's unique architectural qualities. The 30 days a year previously agreed (in 2006) is considered to represent a reasonable balance.

The current display is an interesting form and will certainly be eye-catching. It could be acceptable for a temporary period if there is sufficient justification for it in terms of its relationship to an event and to its location in Regent Street.

However, in this case it is considered that it is not justified. The display would be for three weeks at the time of the launch of the festival rather than the festival itself which is not until September. It is also unclear why Regent Street has been chosen as an appropriate place for the advertisement sculpture. If this display was considered acceptable in principle then a less sensitive location outside Regent Street might be found which did not harm the conservation area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings. Oxford Street might be considered an acceptable alternative location.

8.2 Westminster City Plan

The City Council is currently working on a complete review of its City Plan. Informal consultation on the first draft of Westminster's City Plan 2019-2040 took place between

Monday 12 November 2018 and Friday 21 December 2018. Following this informal consultation, any representations received are being considered and the draft plan will be revised in advance of formal consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Given the very early stage of the consultation process and having regard to the tests set out in para. 48 of the NPPF, the policies of the emerging draft City Plan are given little to no weight at the present time.

8.3 Neighbourhood Plans

Regent Street forms the eastern boundary of Mayfair. The submission version of the Mayfair Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted by Mayfair Neighbourhood Forum to the council for consultation and an independent examiner is due to be appointed shortly.

The draft plan which currently has no material weight recognises the importance of Regent Street in both heritage and commercial terms. Two relevant sections of the plan state:

Regent Street and Mount Street

1.14 Regent Street and Mount Street are the two successes of Mayfair in terms of public realm improvements. Through careful, thoughtful, and beautiful design improvements, the retail offer has been able to develop and grow to become high-quality, international destinations in their own right.

Maximising the positive impact of retail on the area

4.1.25 Shopfronts, including signage, canopies, lighting and outdoor furniture, contribute as much to the quality of the public realm in and around retail areas as the built form. It has the most visual impact, and therefore must be closely and carefully considered.

8.4 London Plan

This application raises no strategic issues.

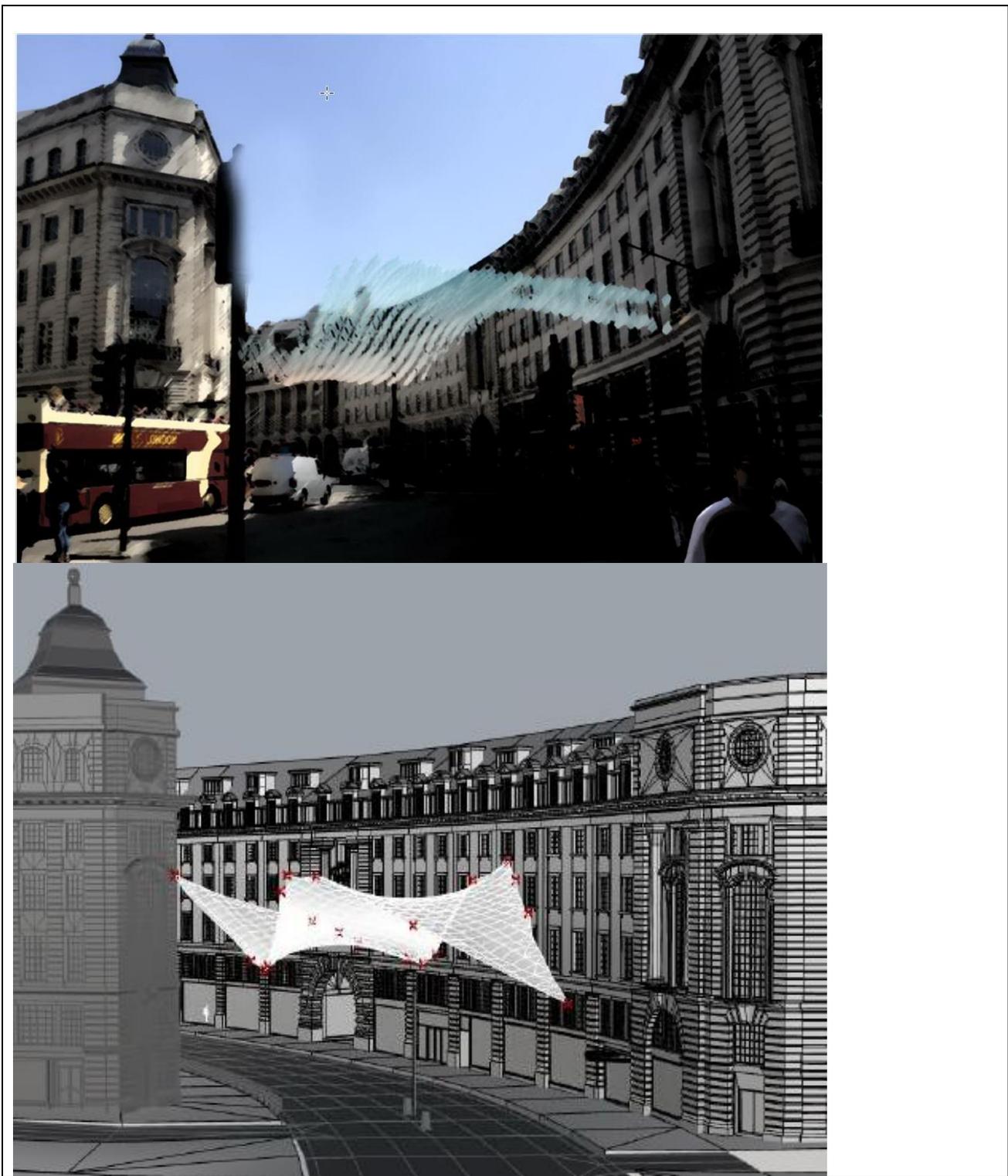
8.5 National Policy/Guidance Considerations

The City Plan and UDP policies referred to in the consideration of this application are considered to be consistent with the NPPF unless stated otherwise.

(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: MICHAEL WALTON BY EMAIL AT mwalton@westminster.gov.uk .

9. KEY DRAWINGS



DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: Regent Street, London W1

Proposal: Display of non-illuminated suspended kinetic display measuring 45m x 17m above Regent Street, starting from crossing of Glasshouse Street / Vigo Street / Regent Street towards Piccadilly Circus for a temporary period from 14 May until 9 June 2019.

Reference: 19/00477/ADV

Plan Nos: Report by Price and Myers - London Design Festival 2018, Regent Street, TRACE (dated 10.09.18); 3 unnumbered plans of the installation

Case Officer: Robert Ayton

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 2978

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s)

Because of its size, design and location, the advertisement would harm the appearance of the Regent Street, the settings of adjacent listed buildings, and the appearance (amenity) of the area. It would also fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the Regent Street Conservation Area. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 8, DES 9 and DES 10 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (X15AD)

Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.