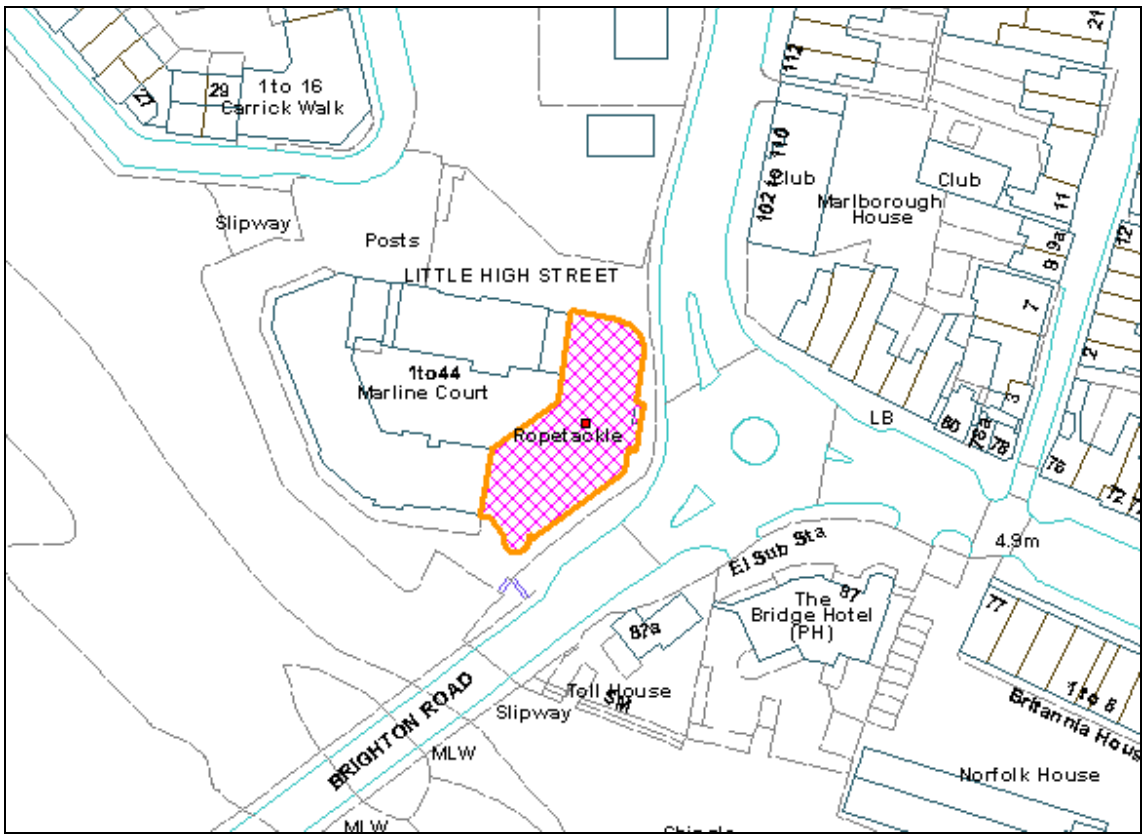
Application Number: AWDM/1424/14 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Basepoint Business Centre, Little High Street, Shoreham-By-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5EG**

Proposal: **Application for advertisement consent to replace "Ropetackle" lettering with "Basepoint" lettering on north and east elevations**

Applicant: Basepoint Centres Ltd Ward: St. Mary's
Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Update

This application was reported to the Planning Committee at its meeting on 3 August where the item was deferred in order to receive further information from the applicant as to their future intentions for signage on the building. Members also noted that there were no representatives of the applicant at the previous meeting and the Committee therefore requested that either the agent or the applicant should attend a future meeting

so that they could address the Committee and provide the reasoning behind this proposal.

The applicant responded in writing to the Planning Services Manager as follows:

I do not believe it is necessary for me or any of my team to attend the Committee to explain reasoning for our desire to have the application determined when I can do so adequately in writing.

You and the committee will be fully aware of the history of the original application. You will also be aware that we sought a compromise which would have allowed us to amend the original application and, to that effect, my team met with Councillor Mendoza and Tim Loughton MP and presented an alternative proposal. It was clear from the meeting that Messrs Mendoza and Loughton were not in the mood to compromise and the attached press cutting of 2nd October 2014 confirms this with phrases such as 'insult' and 'rejected out of hand' signifying the extent of their animosity towards Basepoint's revised proposal.

I am of course delighted that common sense prevailed and that our second application incorporating the compromise, initiated by a local resident, was recommended by officers and subsequently approved by Committee. As you know, we have now erected all the signage in accordance with the consent and it is not my intention to alter this if the original application is approved by Committee which I believe it should be given there are no planning considerations for a refusal which is evidenced by your own report recommending it.

I note that you believe it should be withdrawn and I would be happy to do that if the application fee is refunded in full. If however the fee is not refunded I must insist the application goes to Committee for a decision.

It is clearly disappointing that the applicant has not sought to address the Committee following its previous resolution in August. It also remains unusual that the applicant states the current signage will not be replaced provided this application, which on such basis will never be implemented, is approved.

There is absolutely no justification for the planning application fee to be refunded.

Notwithstanding the above, though, it remains that the application must be determined on its planning merits. As set out in the planning assessment below, which accompanied the earlier report in August, your officers do not consider that there any valid planning reasons against which the proposal can be resisted.

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

This application was submitted before the subsequent approved application AWDM/1750/14 which was for signage stating 'Basepoint @ Ropetackle'. It has been held in abeyance while that later application was determined. The signage approved under AWDM/1750/14 has been installed on the building. Nevertheless, the applicants have advised that they now wish to have the earlier application determined.

The application relates to the Basepoint Business Centre (formerly the Adur Business Centre) located within the building at the western end of the High Street, formerly known as 'Ropetackle'. It is located just outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the Shoreham Conservation Area. It is a landmark building with a timber boarded 'tower' which faces east along the High Street which previously contained the name 'Ropetackle' in white individual letters running down the tower, with a clock face alongside. A similar tower faces north along Little High Street and also contained similar lettering.

In 2014 the owners of the building, Basepoint Centres Ltd., removed the original lettering from both the north and east towers and replaced them with 'Basepoint', also in white acrylic lettering running down the towers in the same manner as the previous signage. This application was submitted seeking retrospective advertisement consent to retain these signs.

Since then, a second application was submitted following receipt of a large number of objections to the loss of the Ropetackle name. The amended application retained the Basepoint lettering but with the addition of '@ Ropetackle' below, running across the tower in white acrylic lettering to match.

The application showed the Ropetackle lettering on the north and east facing towers introduced the same lettering (i.e. Basepoint @ Ropetackle) on the west tower facing the river and road bridge. This application was approved by Members at the Planning Committee meeting on 16 February 2015.

This current application is seeking permission for the display of the name 'Basepoint' only on the north and east towers only.

Relevant Planning History

Advertisement consent was refused in 2013 (AWDM/1445/12) for the addition of three signs on the north, east and south towers (alongside the existing Ropetackle lettering on the north and east towers) which consisted of the letter B in green acrylic (formed by two separate curved green shapes which replicate the 'B' shape) with the wording 'Basepoint Business Centres' below in individual green lettering. A subsequent appeal was dismissed with the Inspector stating:-

"The proposed additional signs, by reason of their size and position at a high level on the tower, would detract from the simple treatment and clean lines of the tower,

resulting in a cluttered appearance and undermining the quality and integrity of the original design. Whilst I am not persuaded that this would cause serious harm to the setting of the adjacent conservation area, the character and appearance of the building, and its positive contribution to the immediate streetscape, would be harmed."

Advertisement consent was then granted in November 2013 (AWDM/1194/13) to display one non-illuminated fascia sign on the north facing tower only consisting of the letter B (formed by two separate curved shapes which replicate the 'B' shape) with the wording 'Basepoint Business Centres' below in individual lettering. That sign would have sat alongside the Ropetackle lettering at a lower level.

Advertisement consent was granted in February 2015 (AWDM/1750/14) to display "Ropetackle" lettering in addition to "Basepoint" lettering on the east, north and south elevations.

Consultations

None

Representations

97 representations received objecting to the application on the following grounds:-

- The name Basepoint is a commercial one which is used purely for advertising and which ignores the nautical/sea-faring history of the site and the current position of the building in terms of the local community
- The name Ropetackle has older and wider significance and should be restored
- The building always has been and always will be known as Ropetackle
- It is a landmark and a point of reference
- Visitors do not know where the Ropetackle Arts Centre is now
- Loss of local heritage
- Inappropriate sign in a prominent town centre location
- Will set a dangerous precedent for visually dominant advertising on significant local buildings
- Sheer arrogance for a company to do what they want without any thought for cultural and historical context just because it has to have a 'brand'.
- Loss of local character and heritage
- Unimaginative, meaningless and boring name which undermines years of marketing to establish Ropetackle as a theatre/bar/gallery space
- The town should have been consulted before name was changed - shows insensitivity and lack of respect for community
- Granting approval would endorse the actions of Basepoint
- Will the name change every time the building is sold?
- Error of judgement
- This is advertising on a grand scale and should not be allowed

- Sign is too large
- Why not have smaller lettering alongside Ropetackle name?
- Basepoint name should be smaller and located over entrance to offices
- Basepoint occupy only a very small part of the building and the overall estate
- Most prominent signage in Shoreham but of no relevance to town

3 representations received supporting the application on the following grounds:-

- Name change should be permitted. There is no precedent to display the name Ropetackle as the site was previously occupied by the Kings Head public house.
- Ropetackle is a location not a specific building.
- The design and effect of the sign remains unaltered from original.
- Refusal would send a negative signal to the business community
- May deter businesses from setting up in Shoreham if there are objections to name changes on shops as well
- Of course a company should be allowed to change the name of a building – Royal Coach became Longshore, Woolworth became Factory Shop, Courts became Dunelm Mill

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AB17
National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

Relevant Legislation

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) provides that the Local Planning Authority may grant consent, in whole or in part, subject to the standard conditions and to such additional conditions as they think fit; refuse consent; or decline to determine the application in accordance with Section 70A Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Local Planning Authority shall exercise its powers in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors

Planning Assessment

Visual amenity

This application, and the changing of the name of the building, has caused much objection locally. The building, in spite of the name change, is known as Ropetackle and the objectors wish for the original name to be reinstated on the building facade. A reasonable compromise was reached with the subsequent approval and installation of the 'Basepoint @ Ropetackle' signage. It is therefore disappointing that the applicants

wish to pursue this application which is seen as a less satisfactory solution. However, the local planning authority cannot control the name of a building and if a property owner wishes to change a name it can be done without the need for any planning consent. There is an argument that the name Ropetackle relates not only to the building but to the area as well and its removal will result in a loss of identity. By contrast, the addition of the Basepoint name bears no relation to the local area and is purely a large advert which would not normally be permitted at that scale.

However, as stated above, the Council can only consider the impact of the signs with regard to the impact on the amenity of the area and on public safety. The merits of the name change and the principle of new signage on the building, including whether the name 'Ropetackle' should or should not be included, cannot be considered under the relevant advertisement legislation.

There is a great deal of sympathy with the objections to the loss of the original name, and its historic reference to this part of Shoreham. However, in visual terms, the 'Basepoint' lettering is very similar in appearance to the original lettering, being at a similar height to the original lettering and actually consisting of 1 letter less. It maintains the "simple treatment and clean lines of the tower" identified by the appeal Inspector and the impact on the visual amenity of the area is not considered to be harmful. As a result of its close similarity to the original style and size of lettering on the building, it is not considered that the new lettering results in visual harm. There is therefore not considered to be any reason to refuse the application on amenity grounds, under the Advertisement Regulations.

Public safety

The signs, being very similar to the original, are not illuminated and do not create a danger or hazard to public safety.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to standard advertisement consent conditions.

28th September 2015