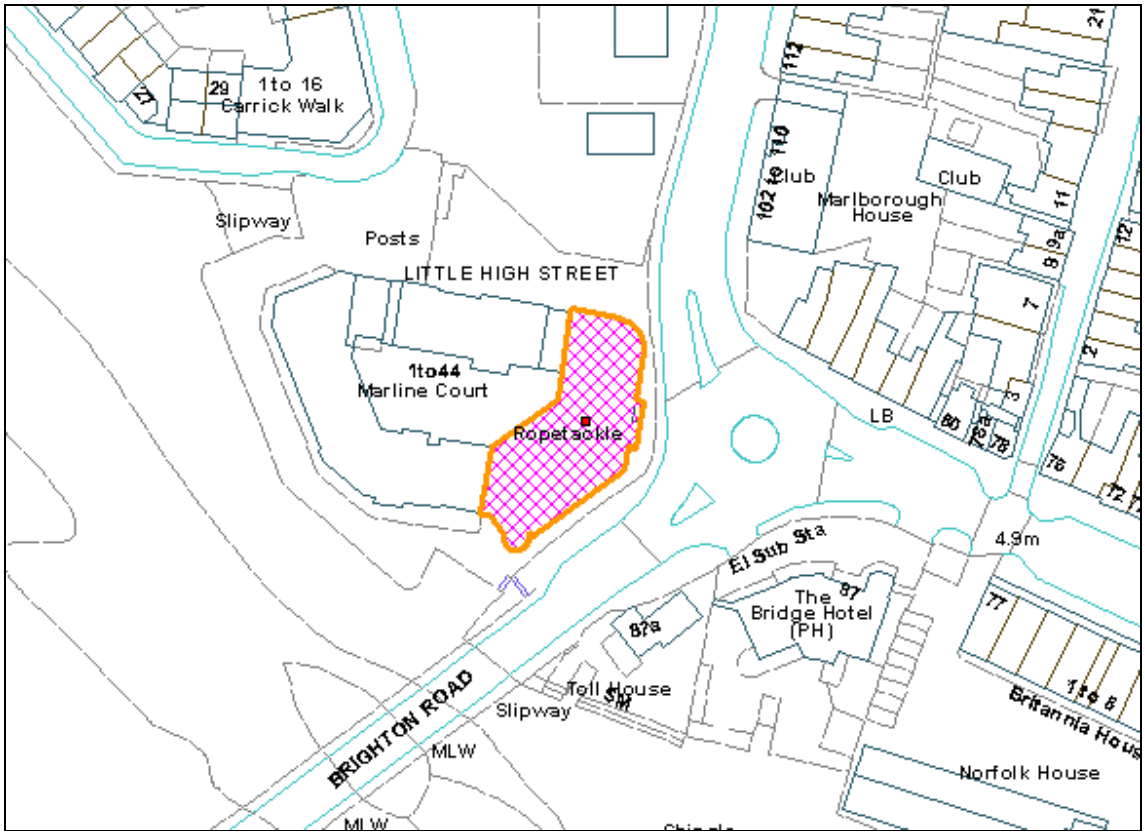
Application Number: AWDM/1750/14 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

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

Proposal: **Application for advertisement consent to display "Ropetackle" lettering in addition to "Basepoint" lettering on east, north and south elevations**

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



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to the Basepoint Business Centre (formerly the Adur Business Centre) located within the Ropetackle building at the western end of the High Street. 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.

Earlier in the year 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. An application for retrospective advertisement consent to retain these signs has been submitted and is yet to be determined (AWDM/1424/14).

However, following receipt of a large number of objections, the applicants have responded to local pressure to reinstate the Ropetackle name to the building by submitting an amended application for the retention of the Basepoint lettering but with the addition of ‘@ Ropetackle’ below, running across the tower in white acrylic lettering to match.

The application proposes to include the Ropetackle lettering on the north and east facing towers but also proposes to introduce the same lettering (i.e. Basepoint @ Ropetackle) on the west tower facing the river and road bridge.

The east facing tower currently also contains signage relating to Ropetackle Arts Centre at ground level while the north elevation contains Ropetackle Arts Centre and Basepoint Business Centre signage over the entrance doors.

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.

AWDM/1424/14 – Application for advertisement consent to replace “Ropetackle” lettering with “Basepoint” lettering on north and east elevations (retrospective) – not yet determined, pending consideration of the current application.

Consultations

Adur District Conservation Advisory Group: to be reported

Representations

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

- Signage will be confusing for anyone trying to locate the Ropetackle area or Ropetackle Centre
- Basepoint signage is too large and dominant
- Scale of signage needs more consideration
- Signage should revert to previous ‘Ropetackle’
- This sort of advertising is out of character in Conservation Area and harms character of building
- No need for this company to advertise as it is already very successful
- Existing signage above entrance door is sufficient
- No other business in High Street has such large and prominent advertising
- No need to add signage to southern facade
- Area has always been known as Ropetackle
- Why should a company do what they like and get away with it?
- Need to preserve historic places and names
- Loss of heritage
- Commercial name should not be applied to a local landmark
- No permission to replace sign in first place
- Basepoint should be required to replace original signage
- Large vertical sign should say ‘Ropetackle’ and smaller horizontal sign should say ‘Basepoint’
- Every time the property changes hands presumably the signage will change too
- Need a sign saying “Shoreham-by-Sea” to replace “Basepoint” and including the Borough Seal (a hulc which is a medieval ship)

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

- Replacement lettering is only one character different from original
- Surprised it needs consent as there has not been a design change
- Two facades could show both names but the main eastern façade facing the High Street should show ‘Ropetackle’ only

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

The changing of the name of the building has caused much objection with 104 representations against the name change received in respect of the earlier application AWDM/1424/14. The building, in spite of the name change, is known locally as Ropetackle and there has been much pressure for the original name to be reinstated on the building facade. There is an argument that the name Ropetackle related not only to the building but to the area as well and that its removal has resulted in a loss of identity, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area. Furthermore, 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, the LPA has no power to require a private individual to display an advertisement. Even if an advertisement is displayed, the LPA has no power to dictate the subject matter of that advert outside of the provisions of the Regulations. Therefore, the argument that the loss of the Ropetackle name is harmful to the area does not comply with the Regulations as the LPA can only assess the new advert on amenity grounds.

Nevertheless, the applicants have attempted to respond to the local concerns in part by adding the Ropetackle name, albeit in smaller lettering, as a compromise.

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 itself cannot be considered under the relevant advertisement legislation.

In visual terms, the new ‘Basepoint’ lettering is very similar in appearance to the style and appearance of the original ‘Ropetackle’ lettering, being at a similar height and actually consisting of 1 letter less. As a result of its close similarity to the original style and size of lettering on the building, it is considered to be difficult to demonstrate that the new lettering results in visual harm.

The extra lettering resulting from the additional inclusion of the Ropetackle name does add more clutter to the tower and does compromise to some extent the “simple treatment and clean lines of the tower” identified by the appeal Inspector. However, the lettering itself is clean and simple and a significant amount of the timber boarding on the tower will remain unadorned. As a compromise, it is considered to be a successful solution which does not detract from the building or its setting adjacent to the Conservation Area.

The introduction of signage to the south elevation will have some impact but the lettering will be smaller than on the other towers due to the lower height of this tower and it is not considered that the lettering will have an unduly harmful visual impact.

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 6 standard advertisement consent conditions and the following condition:

7. Approved Plans