

10. 19/0140/ADV: Installation of two fascia signs, one projecting sign, one set of individual letters, poster cases and associated lighting at DRUIDS, 205 HIGH STREET, RICKMANSWORTH, WD3 1BB (DCES)

Parish: Batchworth Community Council
Expiry of Statutory Period: 21.03.2109

Ward: Rickmansworth Town
Case Officer: Claire Wilson

Recommendation: That Advertisement Consent be Granted.

Reason for consideration by the Committee: This application has been called into Committee by Batchworth Community Council.

1 Relevant Planning History

- 1.1 05/0583/ADV Advert Consent: Installation of three externally illuminated fascia signs and one internally illuminated menu board. Application withdrawn.
- 1.2 05/1336/ADV: Advert Consent: Replacement signage. Application refused. Appeal part allowed/part dismissed
- 1.3 06/0998/FUL: Retrospective: Installation of air-conditioning unit to side elevation. Application permitted
- 1.4 06/1542/ADV: Signage to front of building and projecting sign. Application permitted.
- 1.5 09/1290/FUL: Erection of pub garden umbrella and new paved area within existing pub garden. Application permitted.
- 1.6 09/1299/ADV: Advertisement Consent: Four externally illuminated building signs and one externally illuminated hanging sign. Application withdrawn.
- 1.7 10/0816/ADV Advertisement Consent: New fascia signs to front and side elevation. New hanging sign. Application permitted.
- 1.8 18/0902/FUL Alterations and extension to form new entrance porch to rear, single storey side/rear extension with flat roof to form new kitchen and cellar, new kitchen extract duct, new external fire escape from first floor level with provision of external railings and fixed seating to external drinking area. Application permitted. Permission currently being implemented.
- 1.9 18/1752/ADV: Installation of 3 internally illuminated fascia signs mounted on cladding, 1 internally illuminated projecting sign, various poster cases to front, side and rear elevations and associated lighting. Application withdrawn.
- 1.10 18/1976/FUL: Construction of smoking shelter to side. Application permitted.
- 1.11 18/2346/FUL: Installation of fire escape door to side elevation. Application permitted.

2 Description of Application Site

- 2.1.1 The application site consists of a detached three storey building located on the southern side of the High Street, occupying a corner plot location directly adjacent to the junction with Wensum Way. The site is located within the Rickmansworth Town Centre Conservation Area which is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial properties of varied architectural design. The building is currently in uses as a Public House (Class A4).
- 2.1.2 The existing building has a pitched roof with two large historic chimneys and has an external brick finish, however, it is noted that the ground floor elevations have been painted grey. To

the front of the building at ground floor level are two attractive bay windows. To the rear, the building has been previously extended with a single storey rear extension with gabled roof form. Work has commenced on the development granted under application 18/0902/FUL and certain elements of the building have been demolished including the previously existing smoking shelter.

- 2.1.3 To the side and rear of the building is an existing garden area containing a number of tables and chairs. The garden is paved, separated from the adjoining footway by open railing of modest height. To the rear of the building beyond the garden, is the existing car park which serves the Public House. To the east of the building is M&S Foodhall, a commercial building with large flat roofed projection to the rear. To the west of the site, on the opposite side of the road is Wensum Court which is sheltered accommodation. The buildings located on the opposite side of the High Street are predominantly residential in use.
- 2.1.4 In terms of existing signage, there is an existing low key fascia sign above the entrance stating 'Welcome to Druids'. Located between the first and second floor levels, is an existing rectangular poster sign which is illuminated by a trough light from above. To the side of the building is an existing illuminated projecting sign, with a further rectangular poster sign located on the flank elevation. Located on the rear gabled projection of the building is a rectangular poster sign, also illuminated by a trough light.

3 Description of Proposed Development

- 3.1 The applicant is seeking advertisement consent for the installation of two fascia signs, one projecting sign, one set of individual letters, poster cases and associated lighting. These are to replace existing signage following the rebranding of the pub.
- 3.2 A full width timber fascia would be erected across the ground floor front elevation. It would have a width of 12.2m and a height of 0.6m. Individual metal letters would read 'The Western' and to either side would be individual text boxes which would contain written detail. The sign would be lit from above by a trough light.
- 3.3 To the flank elevation, a further timber fascia sign is proposed which would have a height of 1.2m and a width of 2m. It would read 'The Western, Sports and Social' and would be illuminated by a trough light from above.
- 3.4 Located on the rear elevation of the single storey gabled projection would be lettering reading 'The Western Sports and Social', it would be painted dark grey and lit from below by a trough light.
- 3.5 The timber projecting sign would be located on the front elevation and would have a width of 0.9m and a height of 1.2m. It would be lit by a trough light from above.
- 3.6 Two posters would be located either side of the existing entrance and would have a width of 0.66m and a height of 0.9m. A poster sign would be located at ground floor level on both the side and rear elevations and would have a width of 0.9m and a height of 1.2m.
- 3.7 A brass light would be located over the front and rear entrances to the building.
- 3.8 Amended plans have been received during the course of the application. The amendments are as follows:
- Reduction in size of the fascia sign to the flank elevation.
 - Alterations to the proposed materials from metal to timber.
 - Alterations to text on some of the signs from applied vinyl to written text.
 - Removal of LED lighting to front fascia sign.

- Removal of floodlights to front elevation.

4 Consultation

4.1 Statutory Consultation

4.1.1 Batchworth Community Council: [Objection]

Unless the officers are minded to refuse consent, Batchworth Community Council wishes to call in the application as the proposals are considered to be detrimental to the existing streetscene and the conservation area of the High Street.

Officer comment: Amended plans have been received since receipt of comments from BCC. BCC have been notified of the amendments, however, no further comments have been received.

4.1.2 Conservation Officer: [Initial objection overcome following receipt of amended plans]

This application is for installation of two fascia signs, one projecting sign, one set of individual letters, poster cases and associated lighting.

Druids is a public house, occupying a prominent corner plot within the Rickmansworth Conservation Area. As part of an ongoing refurbishment plan, the pub is to be renamed 'The Western' and this application relates to signage which forms part of the rebrand. Despite not being listed, it is a positive contributor to the street scene and is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

The proposed alterations are largely unsympathetic to the building's character due to the materials and size of the proposed signage. The use of coated metal for the signage is out of keeping with the age and appearance of the building, and will not positively contribute to its conservation. Under the National Planning Policy Framework, section 196, the proposals for the plate and hanging signs would amount to less than substantial harm to the conservation area, introducing modern materials into the area in an overtly prominent manner.

Consideration may be given to an amended proposal which uses sympathetic materials, such as timber, for the plate signage. Painted lettering, rather than individually cut letters on the rear elevation would also be more appropriate, lying flat against the wall rather than protruding from the wall surface. Similarly, substituting the use of applied vinyl for painted text/boxes on the front elevation would be more sensitive to the character and significance of both the building and the conservation area. Reducing the size of the sign on the side elevation will also help ensure the proposed signage does not dominate this view of the High Street when approaching the road from Wensum Way.

In addition, the proposed internal LED lighting in the lettering on the front elevation will make the signage the dominant feature on this façade, detracting from the building's character and dominating the bay windows which are a pleasing architectural feature. Although individual metal letters are not objectionable in this area, a more sympathetic way of lighting the name plate could be found. The use of a trough light, as proposed for the side elevation, or up lighters, for example, would be a more considerate method of illuminating 'The Western' on the front façade.

Other elements, such as the proposed colours for the signage, brass lanterns and the addition of poster cases are not deemed to be harmful to the building or conservation area

Officer comment: The Conservation Officer was consulted with regard to the amended plans and confirmed that they were acceptable.

4.1.3 Environmental Health: Verbal comments received. Concern raised with regard to the LED flood lights. No objection to other elements

4.1.4 National Grid: No comments received.

4.2 Public/Neighbour Consultation

4.2.1 Number consulted: 49 No of responses received: None received

4.2.2 Site Notice: Expiry 07.03.2019 Press notice: Expiry 22.02.2019

5 Reason for Delay

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

In February 2019 the new National Planning Policy Framework was published. This is read alongside the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The determination of planning applications is made mindful of Central Government advice and the Local Plan for the area. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities must determine applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against another. The 2019 NPPF is clear that "existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework".

The NPPF states that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'. The NPPF retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.2 The Three Rivers Local Plan

The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies, CP1, CP7, CP9, CP10 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (DMLDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM3 and DM9.

6.3 Other

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted February 2015).

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

7 Planning Analysis

7.1 Advertisement Regulations

7.1.1 Outdoor advertisements are within the scope of the control regime specified by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended). This regime enables local planning authorities to control advertisements, when it is justified, in the interests of "amenity" and "public safety".

7.1.2 Amenity is not defined in the Regulations, although it includes aural and visual amenity and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality and the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

7.1.3 Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises 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

7.2 Impact on Character, Street Scene and the Conservation Area.

7.2.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design the Council will expect development proposals to 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area'. Development should make efficient use of land but should also respect the 'distinctiveness of the surrounding area in terms of density, character, layout and spacing, amenity, scale, height, massing and use of materials'; 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area' and 'incorporate visually attractive frontages to adjoining streets and public spaces'.

7.2.2 Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies relates to Heritage Asset and advises that the Council will only permit development proposals including solutions to shop front security and/or use of standardised shop front designs, fascia's or advertisement displays in a Conservation Area if they:

- i) Are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;*
- ii) Respect the scale, proportions, character and materials of construction of the upper part of the building and adjoining buildings and the street scene in general;*
- iii) Incorporate traditional materials where the age and character of the building makes this appropriate.*

Generally, totally internally illuminated fascias or projecting signs will not be permitted. The Council will also not support applications for additional signs that would result in a proliferation of band excess amount of, advertisement material on any individual building or group of buildings.

7.2.3 The application building occupies a prominent corner plot location within the Conservation Area and it is considered that the building makes a positive contribution to the character

and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is noted that the existing signage on the building is not the most attractive or sympathetic, however, it is relatively low key and does not dominate the existing building.

- 7.2.4 The Conservation Officer raised significant objections in relation to the original plans due to the size of the signage proposed and the use of external materials. In particular, concern was raised with regard to the originally proposed fascia sign to the flank elevation of the building as this would have dominated this elevation and the view of the High Street from Wensum Way to an unacceptable degree. In addition, the use of coated metal for the signage was considered to be inappropriate given the age and appearance of the building and as such the proposal would not have preserved or enhanced the appearance of the building or Conservation Area. With regard to the signage to the rear projection, the Conservation Officer suggested that painted lettering in this location would be preferable.
- 7.2.5 With regard to the proposed fascia to the front elevation, the Conservation Officer did not object to the use of individual lettering, however, concern was also raised with regard to the proposed internal LED lighting to the lettering on the front elevation. It was considered that this would make the signage the dominant feature on the façade and would detract from the buildings character. It was considered that a more sympathetic form of illumination such as trough lighting should be sought.
- 7.2.6 In response, amended plans have been received which have sought to overcome the Conservation Officer's concerns. The fascia sign to the frontage would no longer be metal and would be timber; this material is considered to be more in keeping with the character of the building and the wider locality. The LED lighting has been removed and has been replaced with a trough light from above to ensure that the illumination is more sympathetic. In line with the Conservation Officer's comments, the applied vinyl text boxes to either side of 'The Western' have been amended to state that these would be 'written' details. The proposed fascia sign to the frontage is now considered to be a sympathetic and attractive addition to the building which would ensure that its character is retained.
- 7.2.7 The proposed fascia sign to the flank elevation has been reduced in size so that it would be 1.2m in height and 2m in width, rather than 2m in height and 3.5m in width. The signage is considered to be more modest such that it would no longer dominate this elevation of the building to an unacceptable degree. As with the proposed front fascia, the detail has been amended to state that the sign would be timber and would be lit by a trough light from above. Again, it is considered that the proposed sign reflects a development which is more sympathetic to the host building and would not detract from the wider character of the Conservation Area. The signage to the rear would be painted as suggested by the Conservation Officer and this overcomes the concerns raised with regard to this aspect of the development.
- 7.2.8 The detail of the projecting sign has also been amended and would now be timber with written lettering rather than metal with applied vinyl lettering. The amendments to more traditional materials is considered to be appropriate to the age and style of the existing building.
- 7.2.9 The proposed development also includes the provision of a brass light over the entrances to the front and rear elevations. The Conservation Officer raised no objection to these elements and it is considered that they represent low key lighting which would not detract from the appearance of the building. In addition, the proposed poster cases are considered acceptable and appropriate to the use of the building as a Public House.
- 7.2.10 In summary, given the amendments made to the development, it is considered that the signage represents an appropriate and sympathetic form of development which would preserve and enhance the appearance of the existing building. The development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted

October 2011) and Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

7.3 Impact on amenity of neighbours

7.3.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy advises that development should 'protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect and amenity and garden spaces'.

7.3.2 The proposed development would including lighting which would generally take the form of down lit trough lighting; this ensures that light spillage is minimised. The sign to the rear would be illuminated by an uplighter. Given this is set in from the boundaries of the properties, it would not impact on the residential amenities of the neighbours to the opposite side of the highway. However, in recognition that the development is located in a residential area, it is considered necessary to add a condition requiring the signs to be illuminated only within the hours of use of the premises. The lighting over the entrances are considered to be low key and given their location at ground floor level would not detract from the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings. The floodlights at second floor level have been removed from the plans due to concerns raised by Environmental Health that they would have an impact on neighbouring properties.

7.3.3 Subject to the above suggested condition, the development would not detract from the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

7.4 Wildlife and Biodiversity

7.4.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive.

7.4.2 The protection of biodiversity and protected species is a material planning consideration in the assessment of applications in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the DMLDD. National Planning Policy requires Local Authorities to ensure that a protected species survey is undertaken for applications that may be affected prior to determination of a planning application. Whilst the development does include lighting, the building is in an urban location such, that it is not considered that there would be a significant impact on any protected species/

7.5 Trees and Landscaping

7.5.1 No trees or areas of landscaping would be affected by the development.

7.6 Highways, Access and Parking

7.6.1 The proposed development would not have any impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway.

8 **Recommendation**

8.1 That ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT BE GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

C1 1] The period of the validity of this permission is for five years commencing from the date of the decision notice.

2] 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.

3] 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 vehicles

4] 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.

5] 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.

6] 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: To comply with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011).

C2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

CS1 124 A (06.03.2019), CS1 124 B (06.03.2019), CS1 124 C (06.03.2019),

CS1 124 D (06.03.2019), 475- (P)-01, 475- (P)-02 B, TRDC 001 (Location Plan),

TRDC002 (Block plan).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, in the proper interests of planning and to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; in accordance with Policies CP1, CP7, CP9, CP10 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policies DM3 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C3 The sign(s) permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

8.2 **Informatives:**

11 With regard to implementing this permission, the applicant is advised as follows:

All relevant planning conditions must be discharged prior to the commencement of work. Requests to discharge conditions must be made by formal application. Fees are £116 per request (or £34 where the related permission is for extending or altering a dwellinghouse or other development in the curtilage of a dwellinghouse). Please note that requests made without the appropriate fee will be returned unanswered.

There may be a requirement for the approved development to comply with the Building Regulations. Please contact Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) on 0208 207 7456 or at buildingcontrol@hertfordshirebc.co.uk who will be happy to advise you on building control matters and will protect your interests throughout your build project by leading the compliance process. Further information is available at www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Your development may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Officer for clarification with regard to this. It is a requirement under Regulation 67 (1), Regulation 42B(6) (in the case of residential annexes or extensions), and Regulation 54B(6) (for self-build housing) of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (As Amended) that a Commencement Notice (Form 6) is submitted to Three Rivers District Council as the Collecting Authority no later than the day before the day on which the chargeable development is to be commenced. DO NOT start your development until the Council has acknowledged receipt of the Commencement Notice. Failure to do so will mean you will lose the right to payment by instalments (where applicable), lose any exemptions already granted, and a surcharge will be imposed.

- 12 The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in its consideration of this planning application, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority suggested modifications to the development during the course of the application and the applicant submitted amendments which result in a form of development that maintains/improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District.