



Report to West Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	22/06990/ADV
Proposal:	Display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign, 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign and 1 x individually illuminated letter sign
Site Location:	37 - 38 High Street High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 2AG
Applicant:	Buckinghamshire Council
Case Officer:	Jackie Sabatini
Ward(s) affected:	Abbey
Parish-Town Council:	High Wycombe Town Unparished
Date valid application received:	19th August 2022
Statutory determination date:	14th October 2022
Recommendation	Application Permitted

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 This proposal seeks Advertising Consent for the display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign, 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign and 1 x individually illuminated letter sign.
- 1.1. The application site comprises a commercial building located within a shopping area in the Town Centre Boundary within the High Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 1.2. The signage is proposed in association with restoration of the building (please see planning history below) and will restore the façade of the building and help to maintain the vitality and viability of the surrounding area; protecting and promoting town centre with active street frontages.
- 1.3. The High Street is used, predominantly, for retail purposes and has a diverse array of shop frontages and signage to include traditional and more contemporary design. The proposed signage would not be harmful to the overall character and appearance of the host building or the area.

- 1.4. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of visual amenity and public safety and will not adversely affect the character/appearance of the area in general or the surrounding High Wycombe Town Conservation Area.
- 1.5. This proposal complies with Local Plan policies and is therefore recommended for approval.
- 1.6. The application is before Committee due to the applicant working for and submitting the application on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council.
- 1.7. The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Plans
 - b) Design and Access Statement (Updated Jan 23)
 - c) Ecology Wildlife Checklist
 - d) Heritage Statement

2.0 Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 Insert relevant planning history for the site:

Reference	Development	Decision	Decision Date
88/07905/ADV	NON-ILLUMINATED FASACIA SIGN	PER	22 December 1988
04/06348/ADV	Display of 1 no. internally illuminated fascia sign & 1 no. non-illuminated projecting sign	PER	2 July 2004
08/05697/ADV	Display of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 double sided projecting hanging sign	PER	9 May 2008
12/07702/ADV	Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 x externally illuminated hanging sign	PER	18 January 2013
22/05431/ADV	Display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign, 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign and 1 x individually illuminated letter sign	WDN	30 May 2022
22/05761/FUL	Installation of replacement door at rear and replacement windows to first floor front	PER	28 July 2022

elevation and associated access changes.

3.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

The impact of the proposal on visual amenities and matters of public safety.

Adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment), DM32 (Landscape character and Settlement Patterns), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM37 (Small Scale Non-Residential Development)

Amenity

Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest; (Reg 3 of The T&CP (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007).

- 3.1. The proposed advertisement is seeking the display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign, 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign and 1 x individually illuminated letter sign.
- 3.2. The surrounding area is characterised by retail units that already have illuminate advertising that is highly visible from the highway and further public domain. Due to position, size and luminance in comparison to other illuminated signage in the area this proposal would not look out of place.
- 3.3. The Conservation Officer's had originally had concern over the signage. However, the applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments and additional information to address these issues. The amendments and additional information were considered acceptable.

The amended DAS (4 Jan 2023) overcomes the issues previously raised:

1. The fascia sign is now proposed to be made using ply backing with individual acrylic letters - this is now acceptable. Lighting details have now been provided.

The six strip lights are 30mm deep and 300mm in length. While directional LED lighting is generally requested as it is less bulky, given the depth of the overhang, if positioned against the elevation of the shop, the lighting will be sufficiently discrete.

2. Hanging sign - acceptable
3. First floor sign - Heritage previously objected to the first floor illuminated sign. Discussions have been held to try and resolve this issue. The building is a modernist 1950s building which incorporates a deep balcony at first floor overlooking the High Street. The building has been vacant for several years but is now being brought back into economic use. The first floor is to be occupied separately from the ground floor unit and there is no ground floor presence on the High Street. Positioning signage above or within the unit's windows at first floor would be largely concealed from view at street level. The proposed sign is modest in size, sits on the balcony ledge in a similar manner to a table lamp and is designed to suit the quirky character of the building. While illumination at first floor is considered harmful in general to the character and appearance of the conservation area, on balance this harm is outweighed by bringing the building back into use which will add to the vitality and viability of the town centre. Furthermore, it is not considered that it will create an unfortunate precedent because the signage responds to the specific constraints and design intent of the building.

- 3.4. It is considered that the proposed signage is appropriate in this setting and will have no significant impact upon the visual amenities of the surrounding area than existing signage.

Public Safety

- 3.5. "Public safety is not confined to road safety and includes all of the considerations which are relevant to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land (including the safety of pedestrians), over water or in the air." (NPPG para 28)
- 3.6. The Highway Department have been consulted on this application and raise no objection to the scheme subject to condition.
- 3.7. In conclusion there are not considered to be any Public Safety issues that cannot be overcome by condition.

4.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 4.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 4.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
 - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
 - c. Any other material considerations
- 4.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies.

5.0 Working with the applicant / agent

- 5.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.
- 5.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the agent was updated of any issues after the initial consultation period and advised of the Heritage Officers concerns and how these could be overcome. The applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments and additional information to address these issues. The amendments and additional information acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.

6.0 Recommendation

Application Permitted, subject to the following conditions:

- 1 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.
- a. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:
 - i) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - ii) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or,
 - iii) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Unless specified elsewhere to the contrary the consent hereby granted shall expire at the end of a period of five years from the date of this consent.

Reason: These requirements are deemed to be attached by Schedule 2 and Part 3, 14. (7) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers A1/3880/06 D, BC1; unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

- 3 The light source must be shielded such that it is not directly visible to motorists using the public highway.

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users.

- 4 The projecting sign shall be erected in such a manner to ensure a minimum clearance above the footway of 2.4 metres.

Reason: To enable pedestrians to pass safely under the sign.

- 5 The luminance of the internally illuminated signs shall not exceed 125 candela per square metre (cd/m²)

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users.

- 6 The proposed signs shall be finished in non-reflective materials

Reason: To avoid undue distraction to motorists and to avoid possible resemblance to and confusion with bona-fide road signs.

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

None received

Parish/Town Council Comments

High Wycombe Town Unparished

Consultation Responses

Highway Authority

Having reviewed the submitted information, I do not consider the proposed works to have adverse impacts upon the safety and convenience of the highway network.

Mindful of the above, I do not have any objections to the proposed application subject to the following conditions being attached to any planning permission that the Planning Authority may choose to grant:

Condition 1: The light source must be shielded such that it is not directly visible to motorists using the public highway.

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users.

Condition 2: The projecting sign shall be erected in such a manner to ensure a minimum clearance above the footway of 2.4 metres.

Reason: To enable pedestrians to pass safely under the sign.

Condition 3: The luminance Of the internally illuminated signs shall not exceed 125 candela per square metre (cd/m²).

Reason:

Condition 4: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users.

Reason: The proposed signs shall be finished in non-reflective materials.

To avoid undue distraction to motorists and to avoid possible resemblance to and confusion with bona-fide road signs.

Heritage

As the NPPF states, heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and it is important to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Information Considered:

- Drawings:
 - Location plan
 - Proposed Elevations
 - Fascia Sign Image
- Existing photo
- Proposed sign image
- Hanging sign image

- Design & Access Statement
- Heritage Statement

Heritage assets:

Designated heritage asset - High Wycombe Conservation Area.

Designated heritage asset setting of listed buildings-

- 39 High Street, High Wycombe listed building grade II*
- Red Lion Hotel, High Wycombe - listed building grade II
- Three Tuns Public House - listed building grade II

Significance

This heritage assessment is the impact on the special historic and architectural interest of the designated heritage assets of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings. The High Wycombe Conservation Area is designated to preserve and enhance the special character of the area and historic or architectural quality of the buildings within them.

The building was constructed in the 1950s. The High Street contains a high percentage of listed buildings, many dating back to the 18th century, including one of the grandest buildings on the High Street No. 39. This property is located to the right of the application building and is a substantial Grade II* 18th century property. To the left of the property is a 1900 building, although not listed does add interest with its massive stacks and ornate chimney ties, with particular note of the grand stone entrance.

Discussion

The application seeks approval for:

- Display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign
- 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign
- 1 x individually illuminated letter sign

This development proposal affects High Wycombe Conservation Area and the setting of numerous listed buildings. The application building lies within the developed area of High Wycombe and is within the Wycombe town historic core conservation area. Shops are an important part of the town's heritage. The retention of a shopfront helps to retain the buildings historic character, so shopfronts form an important element in setting the special character of the conservation area.

1. Display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia sign

The signage would include a shopfront fascia sign displayed above the street door to read "Tabletop Republic" against a blue background and with a business logo in the form of a stylised dice.

From the information submitted the fascia sign would be polycarbonate sheet. The completed sign will be fixed to the existing blue coloured panel above the High Street elevation windows and door. The sign is manufactured from a dark blue 6mm polycarbonate sheet, cut to the profile shown below, onto which is mounted the lettering and logo, also formed from 6mm thick polycarbonate sheet. In heritage terms, it would be more sympathetic to have a timber back board with either individual vinyl or metal mounted letters, or hand painted similar to numerous other commercial premises along the High Street.

The sign is also to be illuminated by lights fixed to the soffit of the balcony above. The fascia sign is to be illuminated but no details are in the DAS on how this will be done have been submitted.

2. 1 x non-illuminated hanging sign

A non-illuminated hanging sign is also proposed from an existing bracket to the right hand side of the shop front display windows, also to read "Tabletop Republic". The material is composite board which would be acceptable, any signage should be finished to a high standard and traditionally painted sign.

3. 1 x individually illuminated letter sign

It is now proposed that the sign for the first floor premises is formed from individual letters, mounted onto a support frame, itself fixed to the coping of the first-floor balcony wall. It is proposed that the lettering will be internally illuminated. The face colour of the letters will be pale blue, RAL 5012, and the sides and rear dark blue RAL 5013.

The individual letters will be 150mm in height and 35mm deep, and the overall sign width will be 1050mm. The bottom edge of the lettering will be 50mm above the parapet wall. It is more in keeping than the previous application, the signage is on the projecting balcony and the proposed signage at first floor is less prominent. However, the lettering is of non-traditional material, plastic materials which will be lit internally.

In heritage terms there are strong objections to the proposed illuminated signs. This would not be sympathetic to the conservation area or the setting of nearby listed buildings Overall, any proposed signage needs to be the bare minimum so not as to detract from the significance of the designated heritage assets.

Significant views up and down the High Street should be safeguarded and preserved. New proposals should respect the character of the small market town. Preferences should be given to schemes that involve paint finished and handwritten signage. Corporate styles can be inappropriate, and designs should be individually tailored to respect the character of the town.

Para 199 of the NPPF confirms that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and Para 200 requires that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration ... or development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.

Wycombe District Local Plan 2019

Policy DM31 - The proposal does not conserve and, where possible, enhances the Historic Environment. Great weight will be given to the conservation of a designated asset's significance, its setting, and other character features or positive elements of special interest.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The proposals would not preserve the architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings and therefore does not comply with sections 66 of the Act.

The proposals would not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and therefore does not comply with section 72 of the Act.

NPPF

The proposal would cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above the application does not comply with heritage policies.

Amendments –FINAL Comments

The amended DAS (4 Jan 2023) overcomes the issues previously raised:

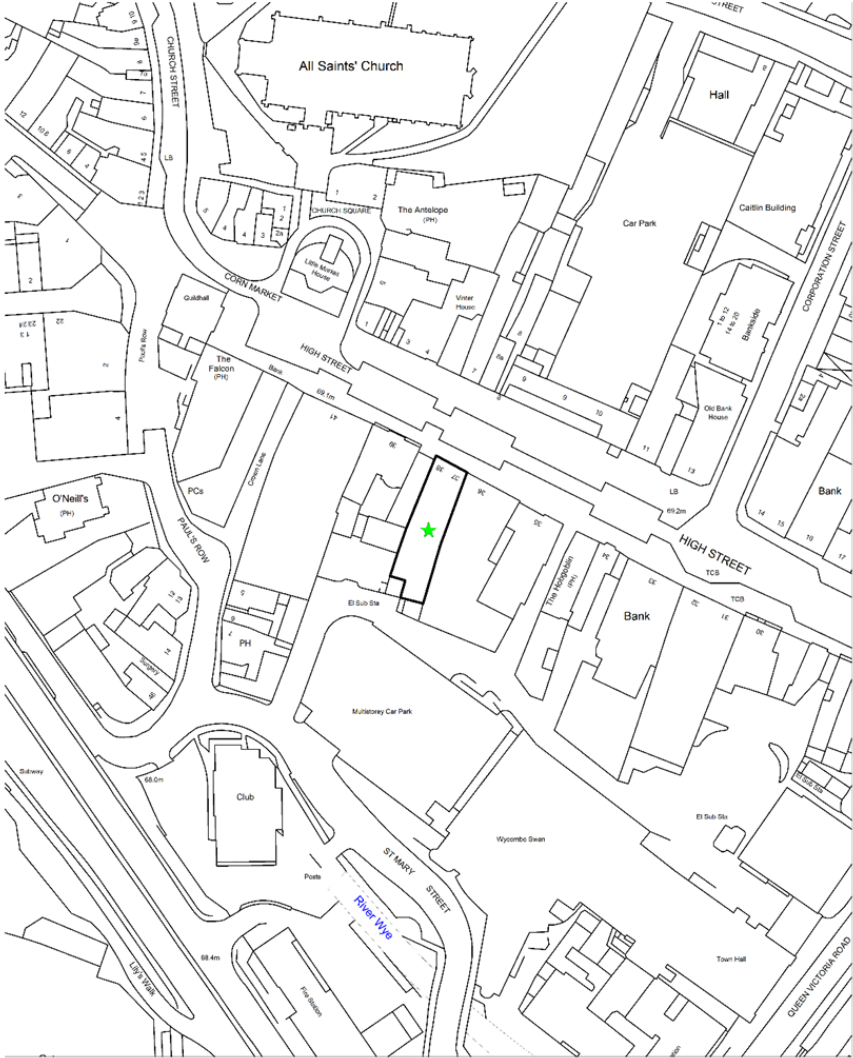
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APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan

22/06990/ADV
Scale 1/1250



Planning Committee
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Ordnance Survey 100062456