

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250549
Site Address:	Red Cross Centre, 53A Denmark Street, Wokingham, RG40 2AY
Expiry Date:	9 June 2025
Site Visit Date:	24/08/2024 – See ref: 241852
Proposal: Application for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of 1 no. internally illuminated wall-mounted sign, 1 no. non-illuminated wall-mounted sign and 4 no. window manifestations.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area
- Adjacent to Grade II Listed Buildings at 51 and 53 Denmark Street
- Non-designated heritage asset

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB19 – Outdoor advertising TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets (where site is within a Conservation Area)
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document – Section 7

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
15320	Part demolition and new extension forming offices and improved Red Cross accommodation.	Approved, 02/07/1981
16730	Part demolition and rear extension forming offices, improved Red Cross accommodation as approved under consent 15320 but omission of windows to the gable and (south elevation) and provision of brick infilling.	Approved, 17/12/1981
241852	Application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed change of use of the building to a dental surgery.	Approved, 19/09/2024

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation (if	No objections - following the receipt of amended plans.
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applicable)	
WBC Highways	No objections, subject to a condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

No public consultation is undertaken for advertisement consent applications

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application relates to the former Red Cross Centre, located on the lower end of Denmark Street within the Wokingham Town Conservation Area.

The proposal complies in terms of:

Impact on amenity: (including impact on heritage assets, where applicable)



Site Context and Heritage Significance:

The application relates to the former Red Cross Centre, located on the lower end of Denmark Street within the Wokingham Town Conservation Area. Historically, the site includes a retained Edwardian annex which originally formed part of a Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1856 and extended in 1902. The building was later repurposed as the Wokingham Memorial Orthopaedic Clinic, dedicated to the memory of local soldiers lost in the First World War. Although much of the original structure was replaced by a 1980s office extension, the Edwardian annex remains and is identified as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) for its architectural and historic significance and positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Proposed Works:

The proposal comprises a series of advertisements and associated minor alterations to support the use of the site as a dental clinic. Elements include of 1 no. internally illuminated wall-mounted sign, 1 no. non-illuminated wall-mounted sign and 4 no. window manifestations.

Planning Considerations:

Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life.

Policy TB19 of the adopted MDD states that the Council will only permit outdoor advertisement where there is no adverse impact on highway safety, no harmful impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses and no harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Policy TB24 of the adopted MDD supports development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets.

Principle SH7 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that fascia signage comprises materials appropriate to their context, includes lettering and logos which are well proportioned relative to the size of fascia and is of proportions appropriate to the building rather than predetermined by brand signage.

Assessment:

Built Heritage Officer Comments – Initial Assessment:

The Council's Built Heritage Officer has reviewed this application raised no in-principal objection to the general advertisement strategy, recognising the beneficial reuse of a historic structure. However, several concerns were identified:

Main Signage:

The originally proposed dimensions of the primary sign were considered excessive and visually dominant. Clarification was requested regarding inconsistencies in dimensions and materials, with a strong preference for timber or aluminium dibond with a low-sheen finish. External illumination was deemed inappropriate for the Conservation Area.

Window Manifestations and Repainting:

These were generally supported, with a request that window paint finishes be low-sheen rather than gloss.

Entrance Signage:

The number of signs proposed flanking the entrance was considered cluttered. The BHO advised consolidating the signage and clarifying materials and finishes.

Lighting to Historic Elements:

The proposed illumination of the memorial plaque and historic building was strongly opposed, given its inappropriateness within a heritage setting and the significance of the memorial.

Agent's Response and Amended Proposals:

In response to these concerns, the applicant submitted revised drawings on 15/05/2025 addressing the Built Heritage Officer's feedback as follows:

- The main wall sign has been reduced in size by approximately 20% and will now feature internal 'glow' illumination limited to the gold 'Tranquil Dental' text and logo only. The sign's body will not be illuminated. The material has been clarified as dibond aluminium with a satin/low sheen finish.
- The number of entrance signs has been reduced to two discreet panels flanking the door, improving visual clarity and reducing clutter.
- Revised window manifestations have been provided, with internal adhesive stickers used to maintain a clean appearance.
- All external lighting previously proposed for both the wall sign and memorial plaque has been removed in full compliance with the Built Heritage Officer's

recommendations. Following the submission of amended plans and clarification of materials and illumination methods, the Built Heritage Officer confirms that all outstanding concerns have been addressed. The revised proposal is now considered to respect the character and significance of the non-designated heritage asset and the wider Wokingham Town Conservation Area. Overall, the amendments made in response to the Built Heritage Officer's concerns have resulted in a revised scheme that is now considered more appropriate for the non-designated heritage asset and its setting within the conservation area. The materials and design are consistent with those found within 'The Plaza' and the wider extent of Denmark Street, ensuring the proposals sit comfortably within the established character of the area.	
Impact on public safety:	☒
Following the receipt of updated plans on 15/05/2025, the proposed signage will no longer be externally illuminated. Instead, the main signboard will feature subtle internal illumination. While the exact luminance level (cd/m²) has not been specified, given the site's location within a town centre and the fact that the illuminated area is below 10m², a maximum luminance level of 800 cd/m² as previously advised by the Highways Officer is considered acceptable. A suitable condition securing this limit will be attached to any approval.	
Relevant policies:	☒
The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.	

RECOMMENDATION	
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	28 May 2025
Earliest date for decision:	8 April 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	02.06.25