

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242957
Site Address:	1-2 Bush Walk, Wokingham, RG40 1AT
Expiry Date:	11 March 2025
Site Visit Date:	17/01/2025
Proposal: Application for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of 1 no. non-illuminated fascia sign and 18 no. window vinyls.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area
- Listed Building – Grade II
- Listed Building Buffer Zone

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
220762	Application for advertisement consent for the installation of 1no. shop front non-illuminated fascia sign, 2no. internally illuminated roundel signs.	Approved, 31/05/2022

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation (if applicable)	No objections, subject to a condition.
WBC Highways	No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

No public consultation is undertaken for advertisement consent applications.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site relates to a two-storey attached building with a commercial ground floor. The site lies within the historic core of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area where there a high number of historic buildings, many of which hold listed building status.

The proposal complies in terms of:

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



Nos. 1-2 Bush Walk is a retail conversion of part of the historic former Bush Hotel and its stable blocks (Nos.37 Market and Nos.1-10 Bush Walk) that collectively hold grade II listed building status. The property lies with the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area and is situated directly across from the frontage of the grade II* listed Town Hall, which represents the focal point of the town conservation area.

This application seeks the installation of the following:

- 1 no. non-illuminated 'Grape Tree Feel Good Foods' fascia sign measuring approximately 5.9 metres in length and 0.56 metres in width.
- 18 no. window vinyl's measuring approximately 1.9 metres in height and 1.45 metres in width.

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:

The Council's Built Heritage Officer has reviewed this application and raises no objection in principle to the proposed fascia sign. However, a more traditional approach, such as painted signage on a wooden fascia, would be preferable. The primary concern is the size of the new aluminium fascia board, as the existing signage currently extends over the top of the timber frame rather than being positioned above the horizontal timber, which traditionally delineates the fascia panel from the shop window. This arrangement has compromised the historic detailing of the building. The proposed fascia signage presents an opportunity to rectify this by reducing the height of the aluminium panel to align with the bottom of the corbel brackets on either side.

Regarding the window vinyl's, the Built Heritage Officer acknowledges that window graphics are a common feature of Grape Tree stores, including those within historic buildings. However, Nos. 1–2 Bush Walk is a unique case, as it is a listed building in a prominent location within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Historically, the building featured solid infill walling rather than the extensive glazing present today. Given these factors, the initially proposed window vinyl's, due to their quantity and design, were considered visually intrusive and overly dominant, conflicting with the building's traditional character and having a detrimental impact on both the designated heritage asset and the wider conservation area.

In response to these concerns, a revised scheme for the window vinyl was submitted by the agent on 05/02/2025. The updated design applies vinyl's to the inside face of the glazing on the Bush Walk and Market Place elevations, incorporating alterations that reduce brightness and visual dominance. These changes reflect the feedback provided during on-site discussions and result in a more balanced, sympathetic design that better respects the character of the listed building and its historic setting.

With regard to the fascia signage, the agent has confirmed that the proposal remains unchanged. Following an on-site review of the existing fascia panel by the Built Heritage Officer, it is considered that the proposed new signage does not raise any heritage objections.

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 listed building and its setting within the conservation area. The updated window vinyl's achieve a more harmonious balance, while the fascia signage remains acceptable from a heritage perspective. To ensure that the vinyl's remain suitable for the building and its surroundings, it is recommended that a condition be applied to control any future alterations or replacements.

Impact on public safety:



The Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the application and confirms that the sign will be affixed to private property without overhanging the public highway footway. Therefore, no objections are raised.

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:	5 March 2025
Earliest date for decision:	15 February 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	06.03.2025