

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	260198
Address:	Refresh HQ, 2nd Floor, 3-4 Market Place, Wokingham, RG40 1AL		
Proposal:	Application for advertisement consent for 1no. non-illuminated, freestanding and removable advertisement board, 1no. wall mounted sign and 1no. poster.		
Heritage Asset:	3 and 4, Market Place – Grade II listed since 1951 Wokingham Town Conservation Area <i>Setting of:</i> The Town Hall – Grade II* 5 Market Place – Grade II 6 Market Place – Grade II* Roebuck Public House, Market Place – Grade II Fosters, Market Place – Grade II K6 Telephone Kiosk , Market Place – Grade II Drinking Fountain, Market Place – Grade II Ye Olde Rose Inne – Grade II Red Lion Public House – Grade II* 22 Market Place – Grade II 23 and 34 Market Place – Grade II <i>Listed buildings and conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies</i>		
Site Visit Made:	Yes		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes a number of advertisements, as to include: 1no. non-illuminated, freestanding and removable advertisement board, 1no. wall mounted sign and 1no. poster at 3-4 Market Place, a Grade II listed building, located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.

As a listed building, alterations which affect the special interest of the listed building, require listed building consent (LBC) – in this case, the proposed signage to be affixed to the front elevation impacts upon the physical fabric as well as the appearance of the building, and thus LBC is required. At the present time, it is understood no application for LBC has been made to the Local Planning Authority.

No. 3 and 4 are located to the north of the Market Place, at the ‘top end’ directly opposite Poulton and Woodman’s exceptional Grade II* Town Hall, within a cluster of historic buildings. This area of the town is remarkably well preserved – reflected by – and perhaps partly of – the concentration of statutory listings. This is a highly sensitive area of townscape and thus any proposed change must be appropriately considered and managed.

Sign to be affixed to front elevation at second-storey height

It is proposed to affix a sign to the front elevation of the listed building to the left of the furthest left window at second-storey height, for the intention of wayfinding, directing customers of the business to its premises. Part of the listed building’s significance is drawn from the architectural appearance, and resultant character to front elevation, which the resultant impact upon the Conservation Area and setting of other identified heritage assets. It is important this architectural interest is not eroded, nor altered in an inappropriate manner. As the Borough Design Guide SPD advises: *“7.8.5 Signs SH7: In general, signs should be positioned on the fascia. Fascia materials must be appropriate to their context, with lettering and logos well proportioned relative to the size of the fascia. The proportions of fascia signage must be designed to be appropriate to the building and should not be guided by predetermined proportions of brand signage. Where buildings have not been designed with shopfronts (for instance bank conversions), it may be appropriate for individually mounted lettering to be applied to the elevation, provided it relates well to the character of the building.”*

And that:

“SH9: Generally one projecting sign per shopfront will be appropriate, provided that it is designed to complement the design of the shopfront, and to relate to the fascia in size, and style. Projecting signs may be hung at fascia level or positioned between the windows on the floor above. In Conservation Areas, projecting signs should be externally illuminated, using fittings that minimise clutter.”

It is acknowledged that 3-4 Market Place has existing signage, in the form of 2no. ‘hanging’ (in reality fixed projection signs) and associated fascias. No planning history can be found for these alterations, and thus at the present time they may be considered unauthorised and subject to enforcement action for their removal. These signs – along with the others on similar buildings within the Market Place – cannot form precedent for further inappropriate alterations.

The proposed signage, whilst relatively modest in scale, would result in a further cluttering of late 18th century elevation, which in combination with the additional signage, (as well as the patress plates and lighting) results in a harmful dilution of

the building's historic appearance, which relates directly to its special interest. This, in combination with the placement – traditional signage should be kept to the ground floors, as it is not typical, and thus peculiar to have signage affixed at this height, given this was historically residential accommodation. As such, an objection is raised to this element of the proposal.

'A-board' to be located on the highway

Whilst it is recognised 'A-boards' are transient in nature, having to be removed during closed hours (predominately due to risk of theft/vandalism), they can clutter and thus result in an untidy and disorderly street-scene. As Historic England's *Street's for All* (2018) advises: *"It is widely accepted that a sensitive approach, such as in relation to the positioning of lights or signs within a conservation area, can significantly improve the experience of residents and visitors. This is considered an essential element of good place-making. Too much clutter, such as a multitude of road markings or large flashing screens, can create impressions which severely damage historic landscapes."* However, given the objection to the above, as this element does not directly impact the physical fabric of the building, and is to be kept to a minimum in scale, no objection is raised to the A-board in this instance.

Wall mounted poster

Given the size and location of the proposed poster, no concerns are raised to this part of the proposal.

Given the above, the proposed wall mounted signage should be omitted from the proposals, as it would seek to cause harm to the listed building and Conservation Area. The other two parts are not objected to, and these two elements would not require listed building consent.

Conditions

N/A

Date:	21/04/2026	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer
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