

Appeals Progress Report

1. New Appeal

- 1.1 **14 Fleet Road, Farnborough** : Appeal against refusal of planning permission 22/00746/FULPP for : “Demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of single storey ancillary accommodation annex” under delegated powers. This appeal is to be considered under the fast-track Householder Written Representations procedure.

2. Decided Appeal

- 2.1 Appeal against refusal of advertisement consent for the installation and display of a 6 X 3 metre illuminated digital advertisement display panel at first-floor level on side elevation of building following removal of two existing paper & paste billboard advertisement panels at ground-floor level at **41 Station Road, Aldershot**; 23/00306/ADVPP. This appeal was considered under the Fast-track Commercial Case Written Representations procedure.

- 2.2 Advertisement Consent was refused under delegated powers in June 2023 for the following reasons:-

1. *The application proposes the introduction of a new modern design and form of commercial advertising using a large internally-illuminated digital display to be operated day and night situated in a visually prominent first-floor position on a locally-listed building in a location with surviving Victorian character and appearance in the form of both Statutorily Listed and locally-listed heritage assets. It is considered that the proposed digital advertisement display would have an alien visual appearance unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the area and to the heritage assets to the material detriment of the visual amenity of the area. It is considered that the material harm to visual amenity is not compensated by the proposed removal of less prominent existing paper and paste billboard advertisements at the site. The proposed digital advertisement display would therefore be contrary to the requirements of adopted Local Plan Policies DE9, SP1, HE1 and DE1 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2014-2032) and the Council's adopted Locally Listed Heritage Assets SPD (2020).*

2. *Despite the suggested imposition of conditions to control the nature and brightness of the proposed advertisement display, the proposed advertisement display would be situated in proximity to, and be likely to impinge unduly into the outlook of, adjoining and nearby residential dwellings to the detriment of the amenities of occupiers. The proposed digital advertisement display would therefore be contrary to the requirements of adopted Local Plan Policy DE9 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2014-2032).*

- 2.3 The Inspector identified the main determining issue for the appeal to be effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area. In this respect the

Inspector noted that the appeal property is a three-storey building with a single-storey rear addition occupying a corner plot within a commercial parade directly abutting the street frontage, with the building having a side return to Little Wellington Street to which two 6mx3m non-illuminated paper and paste advertising displays are affixed along its length at ground floor. The property is within a town-centre fringe location with a mix of surrounding ground floor commercial uses, with mixed commercial and residential above, amongst some other more contemporary residential blocks, including the high-rise Stafford House on the opposite corner of the junction between Little Wellington Street and Station Road. The Council has identified No.41 as a locally listed heritage asset by virtue of its external architectural interest and as being part of the area's wider Victorian heritage, which is reinforced by a group of three grade II listed buildings comprising the former Masonic Hall, the General Post Office, and the Palace Cinema to either side of Station Road, all located south of the appeal site and nearer to the town centre's core. Despite the commercial uses in the locality, the Inspector saw that advertising along Station Road is very muted and low key, limited mostly to fascias above ground floor shopfronts, and principally with external illumination. The Inspector considered that, although alone in terms of their form, the existing paper and paste panel advertisements displayed to the side of the appeal property reasonably respect their setting.

- 2.4 Despite the proposed 50% net reduction in advertising space on the side of No 41, the Inspector did not share the Appellants' view that the change from replacing the existing two displays to a single digital display would be 'modest'. To the contrary, notwithstanding any controls that could be imposed by condition upon the intensity of illumination, the Inspector considered that the digital panel would overtly break from the established character of the area and introduce a large, internally illuminated panel at an elevated level that would be alien and out of keeping within its setting. Furthermore, its form and siting would show no respect for the architectural composition or historic character of the building. In particular, the Inspector considered that the height of the display's base would be poorly aligned with the first-floor oriel windows to the front elevation of the building such that the advertisement would be openly perceived to be disjointed and ill-conceived when looking north towards the appeal site along Station Road. Overall, the Inspector concluded that the advertisement would stand out as an unsympathetic, incongruous, and visually dominant feature within the locality, including when viewed at close quarters in the outlook from facing flats opposite in Stafford House, and that it would detract from the traditional character and appearance of the appeal property and cause harm to the visual amenity of the area.
- 2.5 The Inspector also considered the Grade II Listed buildings nearby but given the separation distances from the appeal site he considered these to be removed from the immediate visual context of No 41, such that they were satisfied that the proposal would not directly affect the historic or architectural appearance of these heritage assets.
- 2.6 The Inspector noted that Paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts; and

that the Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. Accordingly, having viewed the appeal site from various aspects along Station Road and surroundings, the Inspector found that the proposed digital advertisement display would appear poorly sited and poorly designed having regard to the established character of the street scene to the detriment of amenity. Whilst the Appellant referred the Inspector to appeal decisions in other parts of the Country the Inspector did not consider that these altered his findings in respect of this appeal case.

2.7 On this basis the Inspector agreed with the Council's reason for refusal and **Dismissed** the appeal.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the report be **NOTED**.

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