



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/00462/AR

ADDRESS: Between Lidl and Waterside Court, LBR

PROPOSAL: Display of 1 no. 5.3m Totem Sign

CASE OFFICER: Laura Batham

DATE: 5 February 2015

COMMENT: GENERAL COMMENT

Bath Heritage Watchdog appreciates the applicant's consultation on the proposed totem sign and is pleased to see that our letter of advice was detailed enough to form the basis of this application. However, our recommendation was also to seek pre-application advice on the details before submitting a new application, and this does not appear to have taken place. Thus the details which would have been explored remain unanswered questions, and for that reason we are unable to offer support at this stage. We only advise the Case Officer of our views, we don't control the eventual decision.

We did establish that despite a totem sign not being typical of Bath, in this instance it would be sufficiently beneficial to the adjacent listed building to make an exception. We provided a model of an acceptable style, and this too has been used. We asked for a size that aligned the top of the name panel to the roof height, and the reference to "static calculation" and a measured height of 4975mm suggests that this has been achieved, though we would have liked an illustrative street view to confirm this. Without a suitable drawing to reference in the Decision Notice, we would expect the alignment with the roof height to be conditioned.

We asked for a colour palette that was compatible with the listed building, and Charcoal Grey on a White Aluminium base coat is close enough.

The detail that we had expected to have been clarified in the pre-application does not form part of the documentation submitted. The totem faces roughly east and west, so the likelihood is that both faces are identical and an uplighter would be required for each side, but the location drawing places the totem beside an unnamed structure, so we are unable to judge whether both sides would be visible and thus need to be lit. There is no drawing showing the location(s) of the uplighter(s), so we would expect such a drawing to be requested by the Case Officer, either prior to a decision being made, or as a Condition prior to work commencing. The drawing should be at a scale that makes the number and positions obvious. An elevation drawing that shows the height of the unnamed structure relative to the totem should also be provided.

The Case Officer had agreed that uplighting would be acceptable provided there were no adverse comments from the Ecologist. The Ecologist is not a contact available to us, only to the Case Officer so this remains an unknown at this time. Also, not included in the documentation is the type of uplighting proposed, its colour and luminance, and whether it only illuminates the totem or if there is some light spread above or alongside it as well. This information will be needed by the Ecologist. The luminance will also inform Highways, another department where we have no direct access. Thus although uplighting currently remains the preferred option, there remains a possibility that the Ecologist might request downlighting instead.

We asked that the lighting for the totem should be switched off when the last of the units closes each day. There is no confirmation in the documentation that this will happen. Therefore we would expect written confirmation to be requested by the Case Officer, either prior to a decision being made, or as a Condition prior to work commencing.

We asked that there should be an explanatory notice of the name “Mero Retail Park” because the average shopper would not understand the choice of “Mero”. There is no indication in the documentation of whether interpretation panels would be provided or not. This could be required as a Condition, but it would be preferable to have had it stated at the outset.

There is nothing unacceptable in what has been proposed, but the lack of pre-application advice from the Case Officer has resulted in a planning application that leaves considerable doubt about what the real intentions are. Until the omissions outlined above are clarified, we cannot support this application.