



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/06207/AR

ADDRESS: Ladbrokes, 16 Westgate Street

PROPOSAL: Display of 1no. internally illuminated fascia sign and 1no. non-illuminated projecting sign. (Regularisation)

CASE OFFICER: Emily Smithers

DATE: 14 April 2018

COMMENT: OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

When determining all applications for new shopfronts and signage we ask that the following guidelines are observed.

The context, or general setting, of Bath should be understood, respected and reflected in any proposed work to shopfronts.

Design, materials and workmanship should be of the highest quality.

Any proposed or altered shopfront should be historically credible.

House styles which do not meet the requirements of style, lettering, materials and signs are not acceptable. Multiples should be required to adapt their proposals to the special conditions of the city.

Standard designs of any sort are not acceptable. They should be specifically designed for their context.

We maintain our objection to the unnecessary use of illumination in the Conservation Area.

We first have to address the issue of the retrospective application. Unauthorised works to a listed building are a criminal offence and cannot be condoned. Ignorance of listing is not a defence when work is undertaken without the necessary consent. The listing is revealed in conveyance searches and the Historic England Register is freely available online. Advice on the Local Authority website is also easily accessible as is the 'Shopfronts Guide' which we refer to. Using retrospective applications shows disdain for the democratic planning process.

We cannot find anything positive to say about this application and the signage that has been installed. It is inappropriate in all respects – form, design, materials and size. It is also illuminated which is totally unnecessary. It is highly detrimental to the listed building, adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area and should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

We would refer the applications to a previous consent (07/03701/LBA) which was an example of how listed buildings should be treated. It is regrettable that this consent was never implemented. Whilst we appreciate that the applicants may not wish to change the existing shopfront (though we would encourage this), we would expect the signage to consist of high quality materials – timber, traditionally signwritten and with no illumination.

SUMMARY

Whilst we appreciate businesses wish to maintain their corporate identity, they should be prepared to adapt their signage to the very special circumstances that exist in Bath. It is always disappointing when businesses choose to cause significant harm to the historic environment as has been done in this particular case.

The works, by virtue of the use of a strident colour, excessively large design, inferior materials and unnecessary illumination, are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Policies DW1, CP6, D1, D2, D3, D8, D9, D10, and HE1 of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be refused.

The Enforcement Team should then ensure that the offending signage is removed within a short length of time.