



Bath Heritage Watchdog

contact@bathheritagewatchdog.org

APPLICATION NUMBER: 18/00229/LBA

ADDRESS: Mcdonalds, Weston Retail Park

PROPOSAL: Internal and external alterations for the change of use from restaurant (Use Class A3) to drive-thru restaurant (Use class A3/A5), including revised access and car parking arrangements, new drive thru lane, installation of a cash and presenter booths, enlarged link between Avon House and existing unit and associated works

CASE OFFICER: Chris Griggs-Trevarthen

DATE: 6 February 2018

COMMENT: STRONG OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog strongly 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.

There are three main aspects to this application – the creation of a drive through, the impact/extension to the listed Avon House and the proposed signage. We will take each aspect in turn.

PRINCIPLE OF DRIVE THROUGH

The entrance to the retail park where Mcdonalds is located is on a busy crossroads junction on one of the busiest arterial routes in and out of the city. We therefore consider that any proposal likely to increase the number of car movements in and out of the site onto the Lower Bristol Road is undesirable and likely to increase accidents. We fail to understand why a drive thru is considered desirable as there is plenty of parking for people who wish to collect their meal.

The Transport Assessment gives data comparing the current customers who park to collect a takeaway order against the new proposal which would see them queue up to collect and pay. According to these figures the cars would be in the queue for an average 8-10 minutes. During this time no doubt their engines will be running increasing the air pollution in an area where the traffic volume is already high, compared with customers who park and collect their meals where their engines will not be running. In addition it could lead to a long queue of traffic which would then stack back to the main entrance to the site and therefore have an impact on the junction.

We do not believe that there is a need for a drive thru, we do not believe this is a sensible location for a drive thru and the applicants have not provided justification for a drive thru.

IMPACT ON AVON HOUSE

We strongly oppose the alterations proposed to Avon House. It is regrettable that an extension was ever permitted to the building, however this is not an excuse for additional damage and harm to be caused.

Bringing the existing extension further forward will make it more evident from the main front elevation whereas at the moment it is set well back and is subservient. We do not believe this appropriate and it should be removed from proposals.

The ‘bolt on’ ‘presenter booth’ to the rear entrance of Avon House is abhorrent. Whilst accepting this is the rear elevation the proposals can at best be described as brutal. We can find nothing acceptable in this proposal at all and it should be omitted from proposals.

Much is made of permitting development weighed against public benefit. As this is a private company there is no public benefit. If it is not possible to achieve the applicant’s proposals without such damage then clearly the project is inappropriate.

SIGNAGE

The excessive amount of illuminated signage and structures proposed here is staggering. The majority of this will be in the immediate setting of Avon House, indeed so much so it will be very difficult to actually see the building. Totem poles, welcome signs, goodbye signs, canopies and pictures, all in inferior materials and illuminated.

For a proposal in the immediate setting of a listed building, it has to be considered one of the worst ever seen.

SUMMARY

The works, by virtue of the creation of a drive thru, damaging extensions, excessive signage and illumination are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of the listed building, 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, SD1, CP1, CP2, CP6, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D7, D8, D9, D10, HE1 and NE2 of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan and should be refused.