

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee

7th July 2004

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0891/04/A – Fen Ditton

Erection of 4 signs, The Blue Lion Public House, 2 Horningsea Road, Fen Ditton for Greene King Pub Company

Recommendation: Part Approval/Part Refusal

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The site is prominently located on the cross roads of High Ditch Road and Horningsea Road in an Area of Special Control of Advertisements.
2. This application, submitted on the 28th April 2004, seeks consent for the erection of four signs advertising the Blue Lion Public House. The four signs are labelled signs B, H, K and L.
3. Non-illuminated Sign B consists of individually applied, green painted lettering that is to be affixed to the cream painted gable that faces Horningsea Road. The individual letters measure 260 mm in height. Sign H is a double-sided pole sign that is to be located within the frontage of the public house. This sign is to be illuminated by upward mounted lights and measures 1000mm x 1250mm. The sign has a green and yellow surround with a blue painted mortive. Signs K and L are directional signs for the car park and are to be sited on either side of the car park entrance located off Horningsea Road. These two signs are to be painted black with yellow/gold lettering and measure 1000mm x 543mm. Sign K is to be illuminated by a lighting trough fixed below to give upcast illumination.

Planning History

4. S/1295/92/A – Advertisement consent was granted for the display of signs
5. S/0786/03/A – A retrospective advertisement application was refused consent on the 11th September 2003. The proposed signs due to their number, location, design, colour scheme and level of illumination were considered inappropriate given the sites inclusion within a Conservation Area. This decision was subsequently appealed. The appeal was part dismissed and part allowed. Those three signs that were granted consent do not form part of this application.

Planning Policy

6. **Policy EN39 ‘Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings’** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 applies exacting standards of control over the display of advertisements in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.

7. **Policy EN30 'Development in Conservation Areas'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Consultation

8. **Fen Ditton Parish Council** – The Parish Council
“Is anxious to preserve the conservation area and objects strongly to garish and unnecessary signage of a commercial nature.” It recommends refusal.
9. **The Councils Conservation Manger** – Whilst no objections were raised to Sign B, the overall impact of the proposed signage will detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is suggested that this development is resisted in this form.
10. **Waterbeach Internal Drainage Board** – No comment

Representations

11. A letter has been received from 6 High Ditch Road raising support for the application save for a reservation regarding the garish nature and colour of the signs indicating the entrance to the car park. It is assumed that all the other signs on and around the building will be removed as soon as possible.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The main issue to consider in this case is the impact of the proposed signs on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Given the nature of this application, each sign will be referred to separately.

Sign B

13. The individual letters to be affixed to the timber clad gable in the western elevation is considered a significant improvement on the 2900mm x 600mm green and yellow illuminated panel sign that was refused consent in 2003, (ref S/0786/03/A). The 2300mm long sign did not sit well on this visually prominent elevation and when viewed against the cream painted gable formed an unduly intrusive and strident feature. The green painted, individually applied letters, provides a more subtle form of advertisement that, given the reduced area of garish colours, has far less impact on the conservation area. It is noted that the sign is not to be illuminated. The Conservation Manager has raised no objections to this sign.

Sign H

14. Since the previous application was refused the design of this sign has been simplified in accordance with the recommendations of the appeal inspector. Previously it was proposed that a 'Hungry Horse' internally illuminated header be attached to the pole above the sign and a double-sided internally illuminated menu board below. The Conservation Manager has stated that the use of plastic is not considered acceptable within the Conservation Area and that the existing metal signs are considered far more appropriate. These metal signs labelled on the submitted plans as existing are no longer present on site.

15. Whilst it is agreed that the use of more traditional materials would be considered more appropriate, given the simplified design it is not considered that the proposed sign would have a sufficient detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. With regard to the previously refused application, the appeal inspectorate stated in paragraph 7 of his decision that “the main part of the sign comprises a pictorial name unit which I consider would be acceptable on its own.” Reference was made to the proposed use of materials in the Councils appeal statement but little reference was made to the proposed materials within the appeal decision. A number of similarly constructed signs were in fact approved by the Inspector.

Signs K and L

16. The size, design and colour scheme of signs K and L have been amended since the previous application was refused. The purpose of these signs is to direct customers into the already very prominent car park entrance. Whilst the colour scheme is now less garish and the size of the signs more sympathetic, I would still question if there is a real need for these signs.
17. With regard to the previous application, the appeal inspector stated that as proposed that two signs “would give rise to an excess of such advertising material adjacent to the access.” It was however suggested that if it was considered that additional signage is required this should be achieved by much less obtrusive means. As proposed the advertisement for the car park is very much secondary to the large ‘Hungry Horse’ motif. A less obtrusive means of advertisement has therefore not been achieved and as the car park entrance itself forms a prominent feature, these signs are considered unnecessary and obtrusive.
18. It is proposed that sign K be illuminated. The illumination of this sign is considered unnecessary along the site frontage and would result in this sign appearing even more obtrusive.

Recommendations

19. Part Approval/Part Refusal

A. Approval – Signs B and H

- 1) Standard Advertisement conditions.
- 2) The illuminated sign, (Sign H) permitted by this consent shall not be displayed in an illuminated form during the hours when the premises to which it relates are closed to the public
Reason – To safeguard the amenities of the area in accordance with the requirements of Policy EN30 and EN39 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
- 3) Sign B hereby approved shall at no time be illuminated.
Reason – To safeguard the amenities of the area in accordance with the requirements of Policy EN30 and EN39 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

B. Refusal – Signs K and L

The Blue Lion Public House occupies a prominent site within the Fen Ditton Conservation Area. The splayed access way to the car park forms an obvious and prominent feature within the streetscape.

The proposed car park signs, labelled signs K and L are considered unnecessary and overly obtrusive within the streetscape and Conservation Area. The advertisement of the car park is very much secondary to the large 'Hungry Horse' logo which is considered as unnecessary duplication of other such adverts displayed within the site. Furthermore the proposed illumination of sign K would further increase the obtrusive nature of the sign to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The display of signs K and L is therefore considered contrary to Policies EN30 and EN39 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Application File S/0786/03/A and S/0891/04/A

Contact Officer: Paul Belton- Planning Assistant
Telephone: (01954) 713 253