

TM/60/10301/OLD grant with conditions 8 August 1960

Alterations and additions to shop and store

TM/60/10677/OLD grant with conditions 24 March 1960

Alterations and continuation of use as retail sale and storage.

TM/69/10916/OLD grant with conditions 19 March 1969

Erection of a canopy

TM/75/10447/FUL grant with conditions 3 December 1975

Improvement of both access to A20, provision of better car parking facilities and the levelling and tidying of the whole of the site.

TM/79/10606/FUL grant with conditions 30 October 1979

Temporary siting of caravan.

TM/84/10082/FUL Refuse 27 July 1984

Single storey extension to farm shop, to form butcher's shop, cold store and preparation area and carry out alterations to existing front elevation.

TM/85/11304/FUL Grant 8 July 1985

Retrospective application to erect boundary fence.

TM/86/11397/FUL Refuse 13 October 1986

Single storey extension to form storage area.

TM/91/10218/FUL grant with conditions 9 July 1991

Demolition of existing separate buildings and replacement with one new building of same total area and new external works.

5. Consultees:

5.1 KCC Highways: Raise no objection.

5.2 Aylesford PC: The size of these signs is unsightly and out of keeping. We have no objection to the original Holtwood Farm Shop sign. Other signs should be of similar proportions.

5.3 Private Reps: 18/OX/6R/0S

- Growth of the shop has led to a proliferation of advertising signs which do not have planning consent which culminates with the intrusive huge turkey at Christmas time.
- Signs are too big, too intrusive and completely out of keeping with the area. The signs are monstrous and haphazardly erected. A visual intrusion.
- General noise of traffic leaving the site on the dangerous brow of a hill across a stream of traffic accelerating away from the Hall Road Crossroads.
- Signs are distracting to drivers.
- Why have the signs been erected without consultation? Why have neighbours never been consulted?
- The Application does not cover all the signs – Slimming World and the large turkey.
- Previous vegetation has been cut down which previously provided an excellent barrier between houses in The Bounds and the London Road. The Applicant should be made to plant a semi-mature plant barrier.
- The importance of generating more business is understood but the signs will have an impact on my personal view and any potential buyers that may be interested should I ever decide to sell my home. The site causes a general reduction in house price.
- Noise pollution from the shop's intruder alarm. The shop is looking more and more of an eyesore. Boxes and rubbish are thrown on the roof.
- Other ongoing issues at the site that need to be addressed by the Council.
- The shell fish stall smells dreadful.

6. Determining Issues:

6.1 Applications for Advertisement Consent are determined with regard to the impact of advertisement signs on amenity and highway safety. As Section 6.4.27 of the MDEDPD states;

"The Council aims to ensure that outdoor advertisements and signs do not harm the quality of the building and natural environment, both in terms of amenity and

public safety...“In all areas, the Council will require the number and size of signs to be limited to a reasonable level and will ensure that the overall scale, design, colour, materials and, where relevant, the method and level of illumination are appropriate to the surroundings and are not detrimental to highway safety.”

- 6.2 Similar guidance is offered in the National Planning Policy Guidance 2012. As paragraph 67 states;

“Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority’s detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.”

- 6.3 In addition, consideration must also be given to Policy CP24 of the TMBCS. This policy seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and respects the site and its surroundings. This aim is echoed in paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 which seeks to ensure that development will function well, create attractive, safe places in which to live and work, optimise the potential of the site, respond to the local character of the surroundings and be visually attractive.
- 6.4 The applicant states that the signage is necessary to maintain trade and that the Farm Shop, in the current economic climate, is struggling to maintain its existence. He adds that the display of signs also helps to support local sign manufacturing businesses and that signage has been in place for 22 years.
- 6.5 The applicant’s letter also makes reference to the fish stall. The siting of a fish stall at the premises is the subject of an ongoing planning enforcement investigation and a planning application has been received although it is currently invalid. A number of objectors have also made reference to the fish stall. Councillors will be aware however that the fish stall does not form any part of this application.
- 6.6 The signs are large – two being 5m x 1.5m and one being 3m x 1.5m. The need to advertise the nature of the business is understood. However the size of the signs is excessive and above that which is needed to draw attention to the premises. This is exacerbated by the number of signs. The size and quantity of signs results in a large part of the building being obscured. This harms the quality of the building and the general amenity of the wider area.
- 6.7 The impact of the signs is further exacerbated by their design. Although the signs use similar colours (red/pink) they display a variety of illustrations/pictures as well as lettering. This adds to the visual intrusion and general clutter. This has a negative impact on the amenity of this part of London Road.

- 6.8 The Parish Council and a number of objectors have raised concerns over the size and impact of the signs. I concur that the signs have an adverse impact. However the signs must be considered only in terms of their impact on amenity and highway safety. Issues relating to property values, noise and the general upkeep of the premises are not material considerations.
- 6.9 The comments regarding an absence of consultation are also noted. However Councillors will be aware that the application is retrospective. All households abutting the site were notified by letter dated 5 November 2013.
- 6.10 The comments regarding other signs at the site are also noted, particularly the large turkey sign. I am aware that this sign is erected annually but, providing the sign is displayed for no more than 28 days, this is beyond the direct control of the Council.
- 6.11 The comments made by objectors regarding the distraction of drivers and other issues relating to the public highway are noted. The signs are clearly visible; however the building is set back from the highway with a private access roadway running parallel to London Road. The signs are not illuminated. KHS has raised no objection to the application and I therefore conclude that the signs make no unacceptable impact on the safety of the wider highway network. However the signs have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the area and I must therefore recommend the application be refused.
- 6.12 The size and number of signs on the façade of a building in this location are not acceptable. The signs are not appropriate to the building or its surroundings. The impact of the signs is exacerbated by their design which fails to respect the site and its surroundings. The signs when considered cumulatively are poorly sited and have a negative impact on the built environment. The signs are therefore contrary to both local and national planning policy guidance.
- 6.13 The need for the applicant to advertise the products and services offered by the Farm Shop is acknowledged, particularly in the present economic climate. The Council has no wish to inhibit economic growth. However this economic need does not, in this instance, outweigh the harm caused by the signage. It may well be possible to erect suitable signs although any alternative signage would need to be substantially reduced in size.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 Refuse Advertisement Consent for the following reasons:

1. The signs are excessive in size and visually intrusive and thereby have a negative impact on the appearance of the host building and wider amenity of the area. The signs are therefore contrary to paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

2. The signs create visual clutter which is detrimental to the general amenity of the area and are therefore contrary to the guidance offered in Section 6.4.27 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document 2010.
3. The signs have been poorly designed and sited and thereby fail to respect the site and its surroundings. The signs are therefore contrary to Policy CP24 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007.

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