

Agenda Item A14	Committee Date 27 July 2009	Application Number 09/00517/LB
Application Site Storey Institute Meeting House Lane Lancaster Lancashire	Proposal Listed building application for the erection of 2 external fascia signs, internal signage and window graphics	
Name of Applicant Lancaster City Council	Name of Agent	
Decision Target Date 30 July 2009	Reason For Delay None	
Case Officer	Mrs Jennifer Rehman	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Recommendation of approval for Listed Building Consent, subject to referral to the Government Office North West.	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 This is the Listed Building Consent application that accompanies the Advertisement Consent application that appears on this agenda. Once again, this application and the corresponding listed building application would under normal circumstances be determined under delegated powers. However, the City Council own the building and are the applicants of the applications. As such they should be considered by the Committee before being referred to the Government Office North West.
- 1.2 The Storey Institute is a Grade II listed building designed by Paley and Austin, constructed between 1887 - 1891. The Institute, which is of significant architectural and historic merit, occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Meeting House Lane and Castle Hill and is an important and imposing building within the Castle Conservation Area. The building dominates the approach to the Castle Hill Precinct and contributes significantly to the City's townscape.
- 1.3 The application relates specifically to the elevation facing Meeting House Lane, which has many architectural features, in particular the entrance doorway where the signs are proposed. The listing description refers specifically to the Tuscan columns on either side of the doorway and their strapwork decoration and cornice detailing.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 Listed Building Consent is sought for the erection of two internally illuminated fascia signs, each to be located on the outer walls of the entrance porch fronting Meeting House Lane. The signs comprise of a ring, with a diameter of 600mm, enclosing an 'i', measuring 450mm in height. They shall be constructed and finished in a black powder coated metal with a depth of 100mm, located 2.2m above ground floor level. The overall projection from the stone wall measures 120mm. The signs shall be illuminated with static pink backlit LEDs.

2.2 However this Listed Building Consent application also includes proposals which do not require the benefit of Advertisement Consent, namely internal signage and window graphics to two of the windows on the Meeting House Lane elevation.

2.3 The signs are proposed to advertise the new Lancaster Visitor Information Centre, which has recently relocated into the Institute from its previous location on Castle Hill.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The site has a lengthy planning history particularly relating to works requiring listed building consent. The most relevant histories are as follows:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
07/00384/DPA & 07/00385/LB	Change of use and listed building applications for the conversion to centre for creative industries, comprising of auditorium, bar and cafe, creative workspaces, Folly Gallery and Storey Gallery and associated admin offices	Permitted
06/00405/DPA & 06/00406/LB	Change of use and listed building applications for the conversion to centre for creative industries, comprising of auditorium, bar and cafe, creative workspaces, Folly Gallery and Storey Gallery and associated admin offices.	Permitted
98/00243/DPA & 98/00244/LB	Erection of non-illuminated individually lettered sign and two vertical banners	Permitted

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
English Heritage	No objections. The application should be determined in accordance with policy and specialist conservation advice.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 None.

6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies

6.1 The following **Lancaster District Local Plan** policies are relevant:

Policy **E41** requires proposals for advertisements in the Castle Conservation Area to be refused if they do not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, by virtue of their position, size, materials, colour, size and style of lettering, including the means of illumination.

Policy **E33** seeks to ensure that internal or external alterations to listed buildings would not have an adverse effect on the special architectural or historic character or interest of the buildings or their surroundings.

6.2 **Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 7** 'Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide' sets out the Councils design requirements for new advertisements in the City Centre and its conservation areas.

6.3 The following **Lancaster District Core Strategy** policies are relevant:

Policy **E1** (Environmental Capital) sets out a strategic policy objective to safeguard, protect and enhance listed buildings and conservation areas within the District.

7.0 Comment and Analysis

- 7.1 The key issue for Members to consider in determining this application is whether the proposal satisfies the criteria set out in Policy E33, and in particular whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of the impact on the special character and historic interest of the listed building.
- 7.2 With regards to compliance with the above policy considerations, it should be noted that the proposed signage has been significantly improved from earlier pre-application proposals, which involved neon internal illumination. As a general rule, advertisements within the Conservation Area and on Listed Buildings are to be discrete and sympathetic, usually involving individual lettering and external lighting. Internally illuminated box lettering is generally resisted.
- 7.3 Notwithstanding the above, these proposals have been the subject of considerable pre-applications discussions involving the Council's Senior Conservation Officer.
- 7.4 Whilst the form of the signage is not typical within the locality, the size of the signage and their position on the building would not over dominate the appearance of the listed building or detract from its special architectural and historic interest. In particular, the proposed fascia signs shall not extend beyond the side wall of the entrance porch and shall not interfere with the detailing of the Tuscan columns specifically referred to in the listing description. The stonework will remain exposed between the ring and the 'i' with the fixings made into the mortar rather than the stone ashlar. Black powder coated lettering is proposed to match the existing black rainwater goods with subtle LED halo illumination, coloured pink. Once again the exact colour of the lighting is subject to a condition imposed on this recommendation of approval.
- 7.5 The internal window graphics do undoubtedly have an effect on the appearance of the Listed Building. However the need for suitable directional advertising to attract visitors to the Information Centre is fundamental. There is also an argument to suggest that the use of internal graphics is less harmful to the listed structure than additional external signage, on the grounds it does not result in physical alterations to the building by external fixings. Internal graphics can easily be removed without causing undue harm.
- 7.6 It is noted that the submitted plans show only two window graphics on the Meeting House Lane elevation, but on site there are four. Clarification regarding whether the applicant seeks consent for the retention of all four or only the two shown on the plans will be sought and clarified verbally at the committee meeting.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 In conclusion and based on the previous pre-application discussions, the proposed signage is considered acceptable and compliant with Policy E33 of the Local Plan. The signage will not adversely affect the special character and appearance of the listed building. Members are therefore advised that the application can be supported.

Recommendation

That subject to referral of the application to the Government Office, Listed Building Consent **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Listed Building Consent
2. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, the signage shall have a matt or satin finish.
3. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, the exact colour of lighting to be agreed on site.
4. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, precise details of the type and location of fixings to be agreed with the Conservation Officer.

Human Rights Act

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

Background Papers

1. None