

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Application: Retrospective Advertisement Consent

Site: The Cross Keys, High Street, Rowde, Devizes, SN10 2PN

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for retrospective advertisement consent relating to The Cross Keys, High Street, Rowde, Devizes.

The Local Planning Authority has identified the building as a non-designated heritage asset. This statement has been prepared proportionately to the scale and nature of the proposals and assesses the significance of the building, the advertisements installed, and their effect on the heritage value of the asset and its contribution to the character and appearance of Rowde High Street.

2. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The Cross Keys is a historic building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Rowde High Street. Its heritage significance derives from its historic development, architectural character, traditional form, and longstanding role within the village.

The building has historically served as a public house and continues to provide an active commercial function within the village centre. Its significance is principally reflected in its overall form, traditional materials, steep gabled roof, decorative timber framing, herringbone brick detailing, original window pattern, chimney stacks, and its relationship with neighbouring buildings along the High Street.

The continued commercial occupation of the building contributes positively to its ongoing maintenance and ensures that the building remains an active and valued element of the local streetscape.

3. Description of the Advertisements

The application seeks retrospective consent for the following advertisements:

- Four fascia signs comprising:
 1. Two Premier fascia signs.
 2. Two Cross Keys Store fascia signs.
- Twelve non-illuminated promotional display panels positioned at ground-floor level on the front and side elevations.

The display panels comprise printed promotional graphics and product imagery relating directly to goods available within the convenience store operating from the premises.

The fascia signs are externally illuminated by discreet illumination bars positioned above the signage. The illumination is limited to the minimum level required for signage visibility and does not result in excessive lighting or unnecessary impact upon the surrounding streetscape.

4. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The advertisements are located exclusively at ground-floor level on the commercial elevations of the building and do not affect the principal architectural features that contribute to its heritage significance, including the steep gabled roof, decorative timber framing, herringbone brick panels, original window pattern, and chimney stacks.

The four fascia signs are proportionate to the commercial frontage and occupy locations where business identification signage would reasonably be expected as part of the continued use of the premises. The external illumination is provided by discreet lighting bars located above the signs, with minimum illumination levels used to ensure legibility without creating excessive visual impact.

The twelve promotional display panels are positioned at ground-floor level and cover the existing windows associated with the retail frontage. Whilst these panels introduce additional visual activity and represent a more intensive form of advertising than might traditionally have been associated with a historic building, they are directly related to the active commercial use of the premises.

The display panels do not require the removal or alteration of historic fabric and are capable of being removed at any time without permanent damage to the building. Their impact is therefore reversible, allowing the original appearance of the building to be reinstated should the future use or operational requirements of the premises change.

The advertisements do not involve structural alterations to the building, the loss of historic fabric, or changes to its overall form and character. Whilst the signage increases the visual prominence of the commercial frontage, it does not prevent an appreciation of the building's architectural form, historic character, or contribution to the wider streetscape.

The effect upon the significance of the non-designated heritage asset is considered to be limited and localised. The minor level of harm arising from the advertisements is outweighed by the public benefit of supporting the continued viable commercial use, occupation, and maintenance of this prominent village building.

5. Mitigation Measures

The advertisements have been confined to areas associated with the commercial operation of the premises and avoid intervention into significant architectural features.

The fascia illumination is restricted to low-level external lighting necessary for signage identification, avoiding unnecessary light spill or visual dominance. The display panels are reversible and do not result in permanent alteration to the building fabric.

These measures ensure that the impact upon the heritage asset is minimised while allowing the building to continue its established commercial role.

6. Conclusion

The retrospective advertisements represent a modest and functional addition associated with the continued commercial operation of The Cross Keys.

Although the signage introduces increased visual activity at ground-floor level, it does not harm the architectural or historic significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset. The principal historic features of the building remain unaffected, and the advertisements are reversible without permanent impact.

The proposals support the continued viable use of an important village building and maintain its positive contribution to the character and appearance of Rowde High Street.

The application is therefore considered consistent with the heritage objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, including Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, together with the relevant heritage policies of the Wiltshire Local Plan.