HERITAGE STATEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT APPLICATION

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ALTON, STAFFORDSHIRE

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1.00 Introduction

1.01 Birmingham Catholic Youth Services (BCYS) are applying to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) for advertisement consent for their proposed permanent signage at the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site, New Road, Alton.

1.02 It is proposed to display the signage at the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site, which is one of the three sites belonging to BCYS. The other two sites are Alton Castle and St. John's monastery (Alton School Building); all located in Alton [conservation area]. Albeit the visual on the signage is of Alton Castle site, the signage aims to advertise various facilities [residential, children's groups and business] offered across the three sites belonging to BCYS.

1.03 BCYS had previously applied for advertisement consent in Feb 2015 which was granted refusal in April 2015 [Ref SMD/2015/0094]. The current advertisement consent application is for the revised signage which has been amended in size, materials finish and appearance to address the concerns that prompted refusal.

1.04 Relevant Planning History for Alton School Building and The Lord Shrewsbury

a) Listed Building Consent and Planning Approval for works at Alton School Building [to offer facilities for the Youth Retreat Centre] was granted in October 2012 and December 2012 respectively.

   Reference Nos: 12/00690/LBC and 12/00895/FUL respectively.

b) Planning Approval and Conservation Area Consent for works at the Lord Shrewsbury for use as a sixth-form retreat was granted in 2013, and subsequent variation of conditions in January 2014.

   Reference Nos. 12/01302/FUL and SMD/2013/0902 respectively.

c) Planning Approval for a Bio-Mass boiler building at the Lord Shrewsbury site was granted in December 2015. Reference No. SMD/2015/0591

2.00 Process

2.01 This Heritage Statement supports the current application which falls within the Alton Conservation Area. It provides information on the application site and its surrounding, the proposal and its justification, and is to be read in conjunction with submitted drawing nos. 2776-50A, -51A and -52A.

3.00 Application Site and Surroundings

3.01 The application site, The Lord Shrewsbury/Soli, is located in the northern part of the village of Alton, and is within the Alton and Farley Conservation Area. It is accessed off New Road [albeit well screened from it], a fairly busy public thoroughfare continuing further north, providing access to Alton Towers which is in close proximity to the site. It is estimated that 54% of the Alton Towers traffic i.e. 1.5m vehicles, use this route.

The Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site is the most preferred option of the three sites belonging to BCYS to display the signage, due to its location within the public realm. The other two sites (also offering facilities) – Alton Castle and St. John's Monastery are in the more quiet area of Alton Village, virtually screened from public domain, tucked away from the public realm and accessed by Castle Hill Road, a relatively quiet road with very little traffic.

Maximum visibility of the signage for advertising purposes is paramount, and it is for this reason the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site was deemed most appropriate to accommodate the proposed signage.

3.02 The Lord Shrewsbury was formerly used as a public bar/hotel with eleven en suite bedrooms. Historically, signage advertising the facilities was located at the site entrance at its junction with New Road.

3.03 The village of Alton is fairly quiet, however Alton Towers attracts a fair amount of tourists and the village and its surroundings are dotted with bed and breakfast/residential accommodations, displaying signage advertising their facilities.

4.00 The Proposal

4.01 The proposed revised signage seeks to advertise facilities [see item 1.02] offered by the Birmingham Catholic Youth Services (BCYS) across their three sites in Alton, and incorporates a visual of Alton Castle, one of their three sites.

4.02 It is proposed to locate the signage just behind the low stone wall along New Road, at the corner of the junction of New Road and the site entrance, on land belonging to BCYS. Due to its corner location, the signage has been designed to comprise two boards, connected to each other at a right angle arrangement, and set back from the stone wall, positioned at an angle and height so that it benefits from maximum visibility by traffic proceeding both ways. The proposed signage (aluminium) will be fixed inside a hardwood frame, which will be fixed onto hardwood posts, fixed into the ground. The hardwood members will be stained to blend in with its surroundings and to keep it sympathetic with the conservation area.

There will be no detrimental impact nor will any existing historic features in the conservation area be affected by the proposals.

4.03 The size of the proposed signage has been vastly scaled down to address the size related concern raised in the refusal of the previously submitted signage. The revised layout of the signage advertises clearly and concisely the facilities offered, and the proposed revised pallet of materials and colours is simple and understated to ensure the signage is respectful of its setting.

5.00 Conclusion

5.01 Birmingham Catholic Youth Services (BCYS) is now also a member of the Staffordshire Tourism Board [this accreditation is included on the signage] interested in advertising the use of their facilities to tourists both from the UK and overseas. The revenue from this market will enable BCYS to improve their facilities and continue to provide these at a low cost. They are also a registered children's charity supporting over 12,000 children per year, many of them hailing from inner city areas.

Employment is also provided to approximately thirty local staff through their facilities.

5.02 The proposed signage is an ideal opportunity for BCYS to make the public aware of the facilities offered through their sites which in turn will also help achieve/maintain their goals.

The amended proposal has been designed so it is favourable towards its surroundings, with no impact on any existing historic fabric in the conservation area.