

HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE LORD SHREWSBURY
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, New Road, Alton.

1.02 The signage will advertise facilities [residential, young people's groups and business] offered across the following three sites belonging to BCYS: Alton Castle; St. John's Monastery [Alton School Building] and Soli [also called The Lord Shrewsbury] in Alton [conservation area].

It is proposed to display the signage at the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site.

1.03 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.

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. 2776-50, -51 and -52.

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, a fairly busy public thoroughfare continuing further north, providing access to Alton Towers which is in close proximity to the site. The other two sites – Alton Castle and St. John's Monastery – offering facilities as described on the signage, and belonging to BCYS, are also in close proximity to the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site but tucked away from the public realm, accessed by Castle Hill Road.

- 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 signage seeks to advertise facilities [see item 1.02] offered by the Birmingham Catholic Youth Services (BCYS) across their three sites in Alton.
- 4.02 The palette of materials and colours for the proposed signage [as indicated on submitted drawing 2776-052] is simple and understated so that it blends in with its surroundings and is not incongruous to its setting. The signage advertises clearly and concisely the facilities offered across the three BCYS sites using a combination of visuals [photographs of the sites] and text, designed in a simple and aesthetically pleasing scale.
- 4.03 The Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site has been chosen to display the signage due to its location. The application site is within the public realm; it is accessed by New Road [albeit well screened from it] which, as described in item 301, is a fairly busy public route also providing access to Alton Towers. It is estimated that 54% of the Alton Towers traffic i.e. 1.5m vehicles, use this route. Visibility of the signage for advertising purposes is paramount and as Alton Castle and St. John's Monastery (the other two sites offering facilities) are in the more quiet area of Alton Village, virtually screened from public domain, the Lord Shrewsbury/Soli site was deemed most appropriate to accommodate the proposed signage because of its location. Also, historically as mentioned in item 3.02, signage existed on this site.
- 4.04 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. The signage will be positioned away from the stone wall, at an angle and height so that it enjoys the full benefit of visibility by traffic proceeding further up north to Alton Towers and beyond. It will be mounted on simple timber posts as described on submitted drawings/application form, to enable a firm fixing.
- There will be no detrimental impact nor will any existing historic features in the conservation area be affected by the proposals.

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 continue to provide at a low cost, and also help improve their facilities. 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 opportunity for BCYS to advertise facilities across their three sites, and also help achieve/maintain their goals.

The proposal has been designed in order that it sits comfortably within and respects its context with no impact on any existing historic fabric in the conservation area.