

**Item 5 – ADV/22/00521 - ST OSWALDS CHURCH, BIDSTON VILLAGE ROAD, BIDSTON, CH43 7QT INSTALLATION OF 1800MM X 1200MM CHURCH NOTICEBOARD MOUNTED ON ALUMINIUM POSTS. (Pages 7 - 16)**

Representations

The committee report states that no representation had been received. However, a representation of support was received stating the following: -

- Replacement of a sign that used to exist in the same location of a similar size and shape.
- The proposed sign is to a standard design and typical arrangement used by the Diocese of Chester whatever their listed status or conservation area location in numerous churches across the borough and county.
- The consent that is being sought is minor in scope and nature. The sign is a relatively small visual intervention.
- The sign can be removed in the future so any perceived harm from the sign is reversible.
- Significant value to be gained by the church being able to promote its role in the community.
- The sign would be viewed against the backdrop of the sloping grass rather than against the church building.
- The sign would not dominate all of the key viewpoints within the conservation area.
- The use of aluminium is to ensure that they last longer and need less maintenance than timber signs.

Some of the above matters have already been addressed in the original report. The reversibility of any harm in the future does not justify the harm of the proposal. The remainder of the above matters are addressed below.

Updated Heritage statement

An amended Heritage Statement has been submitted by the applicant in support of the application. A copy of the statement is published on the Council's website. It states that the aluminium structure (as opposed to timber) will safeguard the board against wear and tear and vandalism. This does not sufficiently justify the harm caused by the sign to designated heritage assets by reason of its overall size, siting and aluminium design/materials.

The updated heritage statement notes that the existing noticeboard sign behind the lychgate is required to display weekly information about activities and worship within the life of the church, which is unsuitable for advertising the church's worship/information to passing members of the public due to its siting. It further notes that the existing and proposed signs serve different purposes and would not create clutter or confusion to the public and/or views of the heritage asset.

It is re-iterated that there are no heritage concerns raised at the principal of installing a second noticeboard, but that the size, siting and design/materials of the new noticeboard should be more appropriate for the sensitive heritage setting of the

proposal such as smaller timber sign to the right-hand side of the lychgate, which is a less prominent location and the location of a recent former timber sign.

The updated Heritage Statement has provided a series of photos in support of the proposal showing an orange sign to the left of the lychgate in 1989 and 1990s on the application site in addition to several signs within the setting of the Grade II listed churches on the Wirral.

Each application is dealt with on its own individual merits. The 1898/1990s sign at the application site as not been present on site since at least 1997, appears to be smaller than the proposed sign and the materials are uncertain. This was the only sign on the church frontage facing Bidston Village Road. It is therefore not comparable with the current proposal which is seeking advertisement consent for a different sign within the current site context and planning policy context.

The common factor of the other signs provided as justification is that they are within the setting of a Grade II listed building. Advertisement consent has not been granted for some of these signs indicating that they are either deemed consent by reason of their smaller size or number, or that due process has not been followed. Nevertheless, these signs are not comparable to the proposed sign in that they are not a combination of the following: -

- within the setting of several listed buildings;
- within an identified key view within and towards the centre of a historic rural village conservation area;
- in a prominent location;
- in such close proximity to the listed church building including its lychgate and historic boundary walls; and
- in such close proximity to an existing metal sign.

For these reasons it is considered that the additional information submitted does not sufficiently justify the harm that has been identified to designated heritage assets as a result of the proposal and the application is recommended for refusal.