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## Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 20/02/18

gan Declan Beggan BSc (Hons) MSc  
DipTP DipMan MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 12/03/2018

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20/02/18

by Declan Beggan BSc (Hons) MSc  
DipTP DipMan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 12/03/2018

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**Appeal A Ref: APP/E6840/E/17/3189971**

**Site address: 5 Welsh Street, Chepstow, NP16 5LR**

**The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Sian Jones against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
  - The application Ref DC/2017/01043, dated 31 August 2017, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2017.
  - The works proposed are 'Retention of non-illuminated sign consisting of black plastic lettering attached to painted gable end wall by stand-off pegs'.
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**Appeal B Ref: APP/E6840/H/17/3190026**

**Site address: 5 Welsh Street, Chepstow, NP16 5LR**

**The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.**

- The appeal is made under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 against a refusal to grant express consent.
  - The appeal is made by Sian Jones against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
  - The application Ref DC/2017/00789, dated 28 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2017.
  - The advertisement proposed is 'Retention of non-illuminated sign consisting of black plastic lettering attached to painted gable end wall by stand-off pegs'.
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## Decisions

1. Appeal A and B are dismissed.

## Procedural Matters

2. I note the description of the works to be retained varies slightly between that stated on both the listed building consent form and the advertisement consent form to that stated on the Council's respective refusal decision notices; I have used the latter descriptions, as copied into the banner headings above, as they are more accurate. I also note the submitted listed building/advertisement consent forms only refer to the Appellant as 'Jones' whereas the appeal forms referred to Sian Jones; in the interests of accuracy I have used the latter.
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## Main Issues

3. The main issues in both appeals are the effect the proposal would have on the character and special interest of the listed building, and on the character or appearance of the Chepstow Conservation Area (CA).

## Reasons

4. The three storey with basement appeal property is a late Georgian terraced townhouse dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and is grade II listed; the property is currently in use as a dental surgery. The property has scored rendered walls and a hipped pantile roof behind a parapet with moulded cornice; the rendered side gable is relatively plain, and is topped with a narrow and long end stack. The front of the property has a three window range of sashes with marginal panes, with access to the front door gained via a flight of steps off Welsh Street, one of the main roads serving Chepstow; the side gable elevation faces onto St. Kingsmark Avenue.
5. The appeal property forms part of a terrace of attractive Georgian properties; in close proximity a number of older properties of varying design and appearance can be found. The listing description states that the reason for the property being listed is for its group value with other listed buildings in the range and also some other nearby properties. The architectural details identified above contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of the building and its significance as a heritage asset.
6. The CA along Welsh Street in the vicinity of the appeal site is characterised by other listed buildings and other attractive older style buildings. Collectively the appeal building and other nearby buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.

### *Listed Building*

7. Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act<sup>1</sup> require the decision-maker, in considering whether to grant listed building consent, for any works, or development, affecting a listed building, or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24), reiterates this stance.
8. The non-illuminated signage that includes lettering and a 'logo' is fitted to the side gable wall of the appeal property and positioned some 4m above the ground level, extends to approximately 2.3m in height and is 4m at its widest. The lettering and logo comprise of black perspex which projects some 25mm off the wall.
9. The existing building utilises external materials of a traditional appearance that are respectful to their historic context. However, with its use of modern materials in the form of perspex, the signage appears at odds with the rest of the building. When the material used is combined with the size of the sign and its positioning high on the gable, it appears prominent in views along Welsh Street, a busy route serving the town, and also from views along St. Kingsmark Avenue; it's form and appearance results in a visually jarring feature on the side gable of the building and from within the street scene.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

10. The Appellant states none of the features as referred to in the Cadw listing description are harmed by the signage; I disagree. As stated in TAN 24, the listing description for each building is principally to aid identification and whilst such a description may draw attention to features of a building and explain why a building is of special interest, it is not intended to provide a comprehensive record of all features of importance. However in this instance, bearing in mind the reference to the side gable in the listing description and how that side gable looked to me when I visited site, it is clear the gable in terms of materials used and how they have been applied is relatively plain and understated; the same can't be said of the signage which due to the material used and its substantial size, introduces a dominating visual feature that detracts from that existing character.
11. I therefore find that the sign would be unsympathetic to and detracts from the existing historic character of the listed building, and, fails to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed property; this runs contrary to the Act. The works as carried out would also be contrary to national planning policy contained within PPW and advice as contained within TAN 24 which collectively seek to protect heritage assets.

#### *Conservation Area*

12. The Council's refusal notice does not specifically refer to detriment to the CA, nonetheless the Act requires that I have special regard to the statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. The Council's officer report refers to the signage as not being sympathetic to the CA and thereby causing it detriment. The Appellant argues the signage does not affect the historic setting or group value of the CA in which the appeal site is located, with any effect being neutral; I disagree.
13. PPW states, there will be a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level; it also states preservation or enhancement of a conservation area can be achieved by a development which either makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance or leaves them unharmed.
14. The immediate area around the part of the CA in which the appeal site is located is characterised by a number of other listed buildings, other notable older style buildings of varying scale and architectural styles, and by open spaces, which between them gives the area a historic civic feel. Collectively the appeal building due to it being listed, and other nearby listed buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. It is notable that the Cadw listing for the appeal property refers to its group value with other listed buildings; any detriment to the appeal building would also lessen the group value of the others and therefore the wider CA. Consequently, bearing in mind my findings on the first main issue, it must follow that the signage subject to these appeals would be detrimental to the historic character of the CA.
15. The signage subject to these appeals would neither preserve, nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA as required by the Act; it would also run contrary to national planning policy contained within PPW and TAN 24, and policy HE1 of the adopted Monmouthshire Local Development Plan, which collectively seek to protect heritage assets.

### *Other Matters*

16. The appellant cites the presence of existing signage in the vicinity of the appeal site and the wider CA to support her case. Whilst I appreciate there may be similarities with signs in the area, nonetheless, the appeal signage appeared to be significantly larger than others nearby; furthermore I am not aware of the planning status of the examples referred to, and in any event, they do not allay my concerns about the effect of the signage which is the subject of this appeal. In addition the Council confirmed that signage related to a nearby property, Boscobel House, has deemed consent. In any event each case is considered on its own merits, and in this case I have had regard to the specific effects of the appeal works on the listed building and the CA.
17. In terms of their respective positions both parties have referred to the potential use of alternative materials for signage, however, the precise details of such works are not before me and therefore I give such matters little weight; in any event I have determined these appeals on the details as indicated on the submitted applications.
18. I appreciate the appeal property adds to the vibrancy and vitality of business within the area, and its commercial use is highly likely to assist in the building's maintenance, however any works carried out to the property in the form of signage cannot be at the expense of the building's and the wider area's heritage status. I also appreciate that the appeal property provides a service to the local population, however, there is no suggestion that without the signage in place the continued viability of the service is in serious doubt.

### **Conclusions**

19. Having had regard to all matters that have been raised, and for the reasons given above, I conclude that appeal A and appeal B should not succeed.
20. I have considered the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act"). In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act and I consider that this decision is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

*Declan Beggan*

INSPECTOR