

DC/2015/00086

PANELS TO BE FIXED TO EXTERNAL WALLS OF BUILDINGS AT FOUR LOCATIONS WITHIN THE CENTRE OF MONMOUTH

PANELS LOCATED AT: PANEL 1 – 1 CHURCH STREET; PANEL 2 – BEAUFORT ARMS COURT; PANEL 3 – 84-86 MONNOW STREET; PANEL 4 – TOILET BLOCK ADJACENT TO MONNOW BRIDGE FACING THE CATTLE MARKET, MONMOUTH

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Alison Pankhurst

Date Registered: 16 July 2015

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1 The application relates to the erection of four interpretation panels regarding the history of Monmouth town in four specific locations within the town centre. Each of the four signs relates to a particular area of the town centre and annotates historical facts and dates. The four panels each measure 1.2m x 0.85m and 0.75m from ground level. Each panel would have black and white text printed on a green background. Three of the four panels are already in situ. The panels are to be erected for a period of 10 years. The signs will not be illuminated. The location of all of the panels is within Monmouth Conservation Area.

1.2 The application for express consent to display advertisements is made by Monmouthshire County Council.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment

S17 – Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

EP1 – Amenity and Environmental Protection

DES1 – General Design Considerations

DES3 - Advertisements

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultations Replies

Monmouth Town Council –Refuse. The application is a retrospective planning application; photos taken for the application on the 15 June show the panels in place, yet Town Council and public were not informed until August with no consultation regarding the making or placing of the panels; images give a distorted history of Monmouth and there are far better pictures available; inaccurate history; signs states that there is evidence of buildings in Saxon times. While there is evidence of pre-Norman houses this area was a Romano-Celtic kingdom not Saxon; MCC funding but MCC being asked to approve – conflict of interest.

MCC Highways – The information panels are in four separate locations, Panel 1 – This is located at the rear of street furniture, therefore for the notice to be easily read off the footway, the relocation of the furniture would be required. Not DDA compliant as shown. Panel 2 – It is located on an area where there is no footway, only a marginal strip. Therefore it is not in a safe location for pedestrians or DDA. Panel 3 – not accessible for disabled and inappropriate location for child and vulnerable adults immediately adjacent to a ladies lingerie shop (child protection) and Panel 4 – this location is at a narrow location adjacent to a bus layby which is a very busy location, and close to an extractor fan of a kitchen. Safety concern. I would not support the inappropriate locations of the notices on safety grounds.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

Two responses received in respect of the application. Both comments were in support of the panels and that the panels that have been placed around Monmouth enhance the town and provide history for visitors.

4.3 Other Representations

Monmouth and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce – have been involved in the Rural Development Plan since 2014 and worked closely with Monmouthshire Project Officer and Platform One to develop interpretation panels on the mercantile history of our town which was not then available to visitors and locals. At no time were the panels to reflect the history of Monmouth and its people back to prehistoric times. The panels were launched at the November chamber meeting and a member of the town council was invited and a great deal of support was given. The panels were then prominently displayed in the empty shop window of the Clarks shop in Monnow Street; this ensured that the public were adequately consulted on the project. Initially it was thought that because the panels were for general public information they did not need planning permission. The project was funded and monies needed to be spent by the end of November 2014, and it was not until the New Year that it was confirmed that consent was required. The panels needed to be installed quickly as part of the funding requirement as the Welsh Government may check at any time on monies spent and that as the panels were to be provided partly for the benefit of visitors it was important that they were installed prior to the visitor season of 2015. It was thus decided to install the panels and apply for advertisement consent retrospectively. The Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly supports this

application and sees it as an example of how the business community can work together with Monmouthshire County Council and, using funds tailored for the purpose, provide something of great benefit and interest to visitors and locals alike.

4.4 Local Member Representations

No comments received.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The application is for the erection of four interpretation panels giving a brief history of four specific locations in Monmouth town centre. Three of the four panels have already been erected.

5.1.2 Negotiations took place in the initial stages of the application with the applicant to agree where the panels should be erected. Initial discussions suggested that the panels be fixed to certain buildings but unfortunately as the buildings were listed it was felt that this was not appropriate including the panel near the Robin Hood public house. After the discussions it was agreed that the initial locations were to be amended and revisions to the application would be submitted so that the application could be registered.

5.1.3 On a routine visit to the area, it was noted that the signs had been erected prior to the application being registered. Amended drawings were subsequently submitted and the application processed. However the panel located at the Robin Hood pub was still considered to be unacceptable as it had been placed in a different location than the one that was discussed on site.

5.1.4 Discussions took place again with the applicant as it was considered that Panel 4 – the ‘Robin Hood’ sign was not acceptable in its current position and needed to be re-located. It was suggested that the sign be freestanding outside the public house or on the toilet block opposite Monnow Bridge/ the site of the town’s cattle market, (indeed, the location and history of the cattle market was what the panel specifically referred to). After some negotiation it was agreed that the panel be relocated to the toilet block on the opposite side of the road.

5.2 Design Amendments/ Effect on Amenity

5.2.1 No objections have been received from neighbours regarding the advertisements. The panels are 1.25m x 0.85m with black and white text on a green background; the signs are not illuminated. The panels are placed 0.75m above ground level. The location, size and design of the panels are considered, following amendment, to be acceptable having regard to criterion a) of Policy DES3 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan which states that proposals for advertisements will only be permitted where

there is regard to the existing number and siting of advertisements in the locality and would not result in unacceptable clutter; and criterion c) which advises that signage, if located in a Conservation Area, should not unacceptably detract from the character or appearance of the area.

This proposal is considered to be in accordance with criterion a) and c) of LDP Policy DES3 and would preserve the character of the Conservation Area and would not harm local amenity.

5.3 Highway safety considerations

5.3.1 The Council's Highways Department have been consulted and they do not support the application on safety grounds.

5.3.2 Each of the panels is located in areas that are considered to be acceptable and do not cause any public safety issues. The panels have been located in areas where the public can read the panels and still have room to pass by, without causing harm to pedestrian safety or the safety of other road users. In terms of the comments regarding Panel 4, this sign has now been relocated to the toilet block where there is a wide pavement.

5.4 Response to the Representations of the Town Council

5.4.1 The Town Council recommended refusal of this application as it was a retrospective application, the literature was inaccurate, the panels have been funded by MCC and that MCC have been asked to approve the application and hence has a conflict of interest.

5.4.2 With regard to the retrospective nature of this application, Monmouth Chamber of Commerce initially thought that express consent to display advertisements was not required because of the public information nature of the panels. They were informed by the Council's Heritage Officer that advertisement consent was required and the Chamber of Commerce subsequently asked the Welcome Monmouthshire Project Officer from the Council's Economic Development section to submit the application on their behalf. Regardless of whether the application is retrospective or not, each application is carefully evaluated on its merits.

5.4.3 s for the comments regarding the content of the signs this is not material in the consideration of the signage which must be considered solely in relation to their impact on amenity and public (including highway) safety.

5.4.4 With regard to their final comment, the panels were funded by a Welsh Government grant which was given to Monmouth and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce. In the initial stages the Chamber of Commerce was involved in the Rural Development Plan project and worked closely with the Welcome Monmouthshire Project Officer and Platform One who then became involved in developing the interpretation panels. No funds are understood to have been received from MCC in respect of the panels which came from a Welsh Government grant, although again, this is for

background information, and is not material to the consideration of this application..

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Conditions/Reasons

1. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
2. ADV01 (standard advert condition)