

Application Number: DM/2025/00717

Proposal: Application to retain the two existing internally illuminated fascia signs

Address: 43 Frogmore Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5AN

Applicant: Mr Peter Woolley

Plans: Location Plan, Photography AMOS FASCIA SIGN, Photography IL GUSTO FASCIA SIGN, Other Statement - Dated 2nd June 2025,

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Case Officer: Mr Ryan Bentley
Date Valid: 04.06.2025

This application is presented to Planning Committee at the request of the Local Member

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

This application was presented to Planning Committee on the 5th August 2025 with a recommendation for refusal. This was not accepted by Members who resolved to approve the application with conditions. In accordance with protocol, the application has been deferred to the next available Committee to set out the approval with conditions. The following conditions are suggested for consideration in the event that Members consider the current proposal to be acceptable:

Conditions

1. Any advertisements displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
2. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.
3. Where any advertisement is required under the above Regulations to be removed, the removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
4. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
5. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any road traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, or so as otherwise to render hazardous the use of any highway, railway, waterway (including any coastal waters) or aerodrome (Civil or Military).

REASON: As required to be imposed by Regulation 2(1) of Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

6. Within one month of the date of this consent, the intensity of the illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent shall be reduced from 300 cd/m² to 150 cd/m². Thereafter, the sign shall at all times accord with the reduced level of illuminance.

REASON: In the interests of public amenity.

The previous report and recommendation are below.

PREVIOUS REPORT (August Meeting)

1.1 Site Description

The application site is No.43 Frogmore Street in the town of Abergavenny. The site is located within the Abergavenny Development Boundary, Central Shopping Area and Conservation Area. The site also has a primary shopping frontage as defined within Policy RET1 of the Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP).

1.2 Proposal Description

This application seeks retrospective express consent to retain the two existing internally illuminated fascia signs.

The first fascia sign has a width of 2.68m and a depth of 0.21m. The height of the fascia is 0.58m, with the maximum height of any lettering being 30cm. The height from the ground is 2.65m. The sign materials are UPC with white text on a black background. The sign is static internally illuminated with an illuminance level of 300 cd/m2.

The second fascia sign has a width of 3.6m and a depth of 0.21m. The height of the fascia is 0.58m, with the maximum height of any lettering being 30cm. The height from the ground is 2.65m. The sign materials are UPC with white text on a black background. The sign is static internally illuminated with an illuminance level of 300 cd/m2.

For the avoidance of doubt, the hanging advertisement sign is not part of this application.

The scale, detail, design and position of the development is illustrated in full on the submitted drawings/supporting information.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (if any)

Reference Number	Description	Decision	Decision Date
DM/2022/00336	Proposed use is to allow seating around tables on the outside area plus canopies. Furniture would be moveable.	Approved	18.03.2022
DM/2025/00717	Application to retain the two existing internally illuminated fascia signs.	Pending Determination	
DC/2015/00803	Design variation of planning permission ref: DC/2014/00224 for Change of Use the partial A1 Use at ground floor level to full A3 Use.	Approved	22.09.2015
DC/2015/00863	2 Sets of externally illuminated fascia text. 1 Externally illuminated projected sign.	Approved	15.10.2015

DC/2014/00224	Subdivision and Change of Use of Existing Retail Unit to provide one A1 Unit and one A3 Unit on the Ground Floor and Change of Use of First and Second Floor to Residential C3 Use Comprising 2 no. Flats.	Approved	14.09.2014
DC/2002/00551	Shop Fascia Sign	Refused	09.07.2002
DC/2003/00384	Fascia Signage.	Permitted Development	09.05.2003

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S13 LDP Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
S17 LDP Place Making and Design
S16 LDP Transport

Development Management Policies

HE3 LDP Design of Shop Fronts in Conservation Areas
HE1 LDP Development in Conservation Areas
DES3 LDP Advertisements
DES1 LDP General Design Considerations
EP1 LDP Amenity and Environmental Protection
MV1 LDP Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations

4.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021)
Planning Policy Wales (12th Ed, 2024)
Town and Country Planning Act (Control Of Advertisement) Regulations (1992)
Technical advice note (TAN) 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control
Technical advice note (TAN) 24: Historic Environment

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Consultation Replies

Abergavenny Town Council - Abergavenny Town Council's Environment Committee have discussed this application at their meeting on Wednesday 25th June 2025. We note the comprehensive response in the statement received by Planning on 4th June 2025, and alongside the many other comments received, Abergavenny Town Council would like to recommend approval of the retrospective planning application.

MCC Heritage - As you will no doubt be aware, this building is within the Abergavenny Town Conservation area and the setting of numerous listed buildings in the area, and as such any development should preserve the special interest for which these are designated, including their setting. Seeing the signage is both internally illuminated and high gloss finish, both are starkly modern and not in keeping with shopfront and conservation area guidance, to a point where we have had to refuse similar applications and ultimately appeals and court proceedings to ensure

consistency. As such, we could not support this from a Heritage standpoint and would need to ask the proposal is altered to externally and minimally downlit signage, of matt finish.

Alternative proposal

Noting this is retrospective consent and that signage has been ordered and fitted, it will likely be possible to simply disconnect the signage and fix new matt finished fascia over in same design fitting downlights potentially at strip lighting if necessary.

Further comments: As a summary of how this position was reached:

1. Internal illuminated signs trigger the need for consent and therefore allow consideration as to whether suitable, by definition.
2. This allows the LPA to consider materials and finishes which are traditional and in keeping with the building and area.
3. The building at present (and much of the conservation area) has limited internally lit signage, meaning that would not be in keeping, whilst it also uses the material with an explicit presumption against in policy (PVC type materials) in favour of traditional materials such as wood or signage of matt (painted) appearance.
4. The upshot is the proposed signage is considered not to be in keeping with the council's long held stance on internally illuminated signage nor finishing materials and cannot be supported from a Heritage perspective.

However, we have suggested a reasonable alternative which allows the signage to be retained with some minor changes. (unplugged and matt wrap laminate).

MCC Highways - No objection. The signage details show they do not project into the public highway and are located at a suitable height. The illumination is similar to existing development within the area and therefore is not considered to represent an unusual or distracting impact on traffic. The proposal has minimal impact on the public highway; therefore, we raise no objections.

Welsh Government Transport - The Welsh Government as highway authority for the A40 trunk road does not issue a direction in respect of this application.

MCC Environmental Health - No objection.

5.2 Public Consultation

The application was advertised by means of a site notice and direct neighbour consultation. 12 neighbour comments have been received to date, all in support of the application. Commented as follows:

- Small businesses are woefully under supported.
- The sign adds colour to the town, and makes it look more inviting and vibrant to those driving through.
- In my opinion the restaurant is tastefully and elegantly decorated, inside and outside.
- The signage is in keeping with the restaurant brand. It is not excessively lit, or poorly designed. The sign does not affect the character of the town. This is a beautiful building and the sign compliments it.
- We want this business to continue to attract visitors to our town. It also encourages people to venture to Frogmore St. It highlights the establishment especially in the evenings and winter
- We need to move with the times and allow sensible changes to buildings, especially those that are not listed, and this is one of them. Planning needs to be pragmatic, progressive and sensible.
- I have noticed that national brands seem to be allowed to have such signs.
- Supporting their signage also means supporting small business resilience and the vibrant character that makes Abergavenny unique with it as independent and characterful retailers and eateries.
- It is pretty much perfect.
- This is not the only illuminated sign in town and is far from excessive in style.
- This is a very tasteful sign fully in keeping with the local conservation area. For the Planning Officer to state that it won't get permission because it is "back lit" as opposed to "front lit" shows poor judgement and experience given that the planning department has already approved 4

separate back lit signs for national brands. Above all it demonstrates a dismissive attitude and lack of support for small independent traders in Abergavenny. This sign is perfectly fit for purpose.

-The signage at Il Gusto is modest, well-designed, and entirely consistent with both the Abergavenny Conservation Area and the policy framework set out in Policy DES3. It reflects the established illuminated character of Frogmore Street's vibrant independent quarter, where night-time activity and lighting are integral to the area's identity. The signage has been in place for over three years, poses no harm to amenity or heritage value, and mirrors previously approved schemes including internally illuminated signs granted elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

-On viewing the light generated by the Tesco unit compared to the IL Gusto sign, the IL Gusto sign is obviously more in keeping with the conservation area. The fact that the sign is internally lit is not contrary to any of the Conservation guidelines, there is no reference to internally lit signs in the guidelines.

5.3 Other Representations

Abergavenny and District Civic Society - We support retrospective approval of the application for the reasons set out in the Planning Statement. In the interests of vibrant modern trading areas and consistency, we increasingly see a need for supplementary guidance that clarifies in detail the application of Local Development Plan policy DES3 in town centre Conservation Areas.

5.4 Local Member Representations

County Councillor Laura Wright – has made comments in support of the application. The current signage at Il Gusto is not, in my opinion, problematic within the conservation area. The illumination is not noticeably different to the level of illumination used by the previous business at this location and it is only switched on during the business' operating hours (until 10pm, which is not unreasonable for a hospitality business in this area). There are several businesses nearby that use similar or greater illumination until the same sort of time, e.g. the Tesco opposite. This means that the signage isn't out of keeping with the existing character of the area and does not noticeably add to visual clutter or constitute overdevelopment of the area. I don't believe that it could reasonably be thought to be causing undue disturbance to nearby residents because, as previously stated, the lighting is of a similar level to that used at 43 Frogmore Street for several years previously. I believe that the Town Council also does not object to the signage and would like Il Gusto to be allowed to retain it in its current form. Supporting local businesses in our town centre is vital to our local economy and I do not wish to see unnecessary additional financial pressures applied to this trader.

Further comment: Given the longstanding illuminated signage at this location, the wider character of the Frogmore Street area—where evening activity and lighting are intrinsic to its identity—and the lack of clear policy wording that distinguishes between internal and external illumination in Policy DES3, I believe this application raises issues worthy of Committee consideration.

I also understand that similar signs have previously been permitted under the same policy. A consistent approach should be applied to all businesses in the town centre. I would therefore like to request that the application is referred to Planning Committee for determination.

6.0 EVALUATION

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 and TAN 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control 1996 advertisements consent applications fall to be determined having regard to consideration of visual amenity and public (highway) safety only. Additionally, LDP Policy DES3 provides a number of criteria for applications for advertisement consent to be considered against. Furthermore, LDP Policy HE3 provides a number of criteria for the design of shop fronts in Conservation areas. These have been taken into account as material considerations.

Policy DES3 details that proposals for advertisements will only be permitted where:

a) having regard to the existing number and siting of advertisements in the locality the proposal would not result in an unacceptable clutter of advertisements;

- b) if located within the open countryside they would not unacceptably detract from the rural setting of the locality;
- c) if located in a Conservation Area, they would not unacceptably detract from the character or appearance of the area and if a hanging sign, would not result in undue visual clutter. They should be of an appropriate size and materials for the building from which they hang with a traditional bracket;
- d) if located within the open countryside or Conservation Areas, illumination is only appropriate to uses that reasonably expect to trade at night.

Policy HE3 details:

In Conservation Areas the removal of traditional shop fronts will not be permitted. However, improvements to shop fronts will be permitted where they retain historic features and the proposed improvements are in character with the area. Proposals to replace modern shop fronts will be permitted where they:

- a) replace or restore lost details which will enhance the Conservation Area;
- b) use traditional materials and paint colours in favour of aluminium or UPC;
- c) integrate fully with the surrounding area, and where it replaces two or more units, respects the character of individual units;
- d) have fascia boards and signing in keeping with the design and materials of the character of the building in which they are set; and
- e) use unobtrusive security measures such as internal shutters, toughened glass or traditional timber shutters.

Advertisement consent was granted via DC/2015/00863 for two externally illuminated fascia signs and an externally illuminated projecting sign. The sign had built up letters in polished stainless steel faces and fixed to a plywood fascia panel with an architrave border and finished in satin black. It was externally illuminated by trough lightings. Within the officer report it was concluded that the new shopfront and associated signage represented an improvement in visual terms to that which was existing. Since the approval of DC/2015/00863, a number of restaurants have operated from 43 Frogmore Street, with the most recent being Amos. However, express consent has not been sought for any of the fascia signs since the Prezzo sign was approved.

The current proposals are retrospective and so there is the benefit of viewing the fascia sign in its context in order to make a qualified assessment. It is noted that advertisement consent was previously granted at the site for externally illuminated signs and this is an important consideration. Since the application was approved in 2015, the Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2016) has been adopted and TAN 24 (May 2017) has been issued.

TAN24 states:

6.8 One of the purposes of the advertisement control system is to encourage the display of outdoor advertisements which make a positive contribution to the appearance of the environment. It is reasonable to expect that the local planning authority's duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area will result, in practice, in more exacting standards when the authority considers whether to grant consent for a proposed advertisement in such an area.

PPW 12 also states:

6.1.15 There is 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. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.

6.1.16 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. Mitigation measures can also be considered which could result in an overall neutral or positive impact of a proposed development in a conservation area.

43 Frogmore Street is located within character area two of the Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal which is known as the historic core. Section 7.3.13 of the Appraisal states that Frogmore Street is consistently well-defined, the appraisal goes on to note that (in section 7.5.2) Market Street, High Street, Frogmore Street and Nevill Street make up the winding commercial frontage of the historic core and there is a good survival of 19th Century and early 20th Century shopfronts, particularly to Frogmore Street. Whilst the building is not listed, it is classed within the Conservation Area Appraisal as making a particular or special contribution. To the front of the business is the Grade II Listed War Memorial, Cadw reference 15662, and to the north is the Grade II listed Abergavenny Baptist Church, Cadw reference 2851.

When travelling along Frogmore Street to Il Gusto, it is notable that the signage along the street incorporates largely simple, traditional finishes with a variety of colour palettes. This is shown on the nearby shops, Carpaninis and Cablenews. Illumination is limited but when used it is mostly external lighting and these factors serve to limit the visual impact of the signage. Thereby preserving the traditional, historic appearance of the street scene and the established character of the Conservation Area. Opposite the site is Auberge whose sign consists of individual lettering that is externally illuminated with downlights. It is also noted that the Tesco store opposite does not have a traditional fascia sign but as this is not illuminated, it reduces the visual impact of the advertisement. The supporting statement highlights the external lighting opposite at Tesco and Auberge. Whilst this is noted, the external lighting has been in situ for a number of years and most of the lighting is not used to illuminate a sign. This application is focused on the acceptability of two internally illuminated fascia signs.

Overall, the signs are designed to attract attention but the use of UPC material is inappropriate and detracts from the character of the Conservation Area. The UPC has a shiny finish and it is a modern synthetic material at odds with its setting. The use of internal illumination exacerbates this shiny finish. The immediate area around the site is characterised by a number of listed buildings and buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Whilst it is noted that a similar fascia sign was previously approved at the site, this sign was externally illuminated rather than the internally illuminated sign that is currently proposed. This application is judged on its own individual planning merits and takes into account national planning policies and the Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal which has been adopted since the previous approval. The MCC Heritage officer has also objected to the development and has commented that seeing the signage is both internally illuminated and with a high gloss finish, both are starkly modern and not in keeping with shopfront and conservation area guidance. As such, they could not support this from a Heritage standpoint and would need to ask that the proposal be altered to externally and minimally downlit signage, of matt finish. The Heritage officer has also provided a potential solution by advising that the illumination is disconnected and to fix a new matt finished fascia over in the same design, fitting downlights potentially as strip lighting if necessary.

Therefore, the proposed signs are considered to be an unsympathetic contemporary addition that appear incongruous when viewed against the traditional appearance of nearby listed buildings and the wider street scene. These impacts would be exacerbated during nighttime opening hours, when use of the internal illumination would cause the sign to stand out within the street scene to a greater degree. With regards to policies DES3 criterion c) and HE3 criteria b) and d), for the reasons listed earlier in this report, the proposal is considered to unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the Abergavenny Conservation Area.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Local Planning Authority are supportive of independent businesses and are consistent in their approach with regards to illuminated advertisement signs. It is unfortunate in this instance that the sign has been erected prior to permission being sought.

Within their supporting statement, the applicant has referenced a number of applications where internally illuminated signs have been granted planning consent. Whilst I note that internally illuminated signs have been approved, there are differences with the sign at Il Gusto:

DC/2016/00429 - This involved individual lettering on the fascia.

DM/2019/00400 - This involved individual lettering with a concealed halo.

DC/2015/01146 - This was individual lettering with a back lit halo effect onto a timber fascia.

DC/2014/01245 originally sought for the advertisement to be halo illuminated. However, this was not deemed to be acceptable so the advertisement was amended to make the sign non-illuminated. Following this amendment, it was 'deemed consent'. The concurrent LBC for the original sign was withdrawn via DC/2014/01248.

There are also recent examples of refusals for internally illuminated signs:
DM/2024/00559 - Marie Curie - Internally illuminated fascia and projecting sign
DC/2015/00039 - Bonmarche - Internally illuminated fascia sign
DC/2008/00805 - Greggs - back lit logo

It is also noted that the MCC Environmental Health officer has no objection to the signs. The previous applications referenced by the applicant do not overcome the harm that the internally illuminated signs at Il Gusto is considered to have in respect of the character and appearance of the Abergavenny Conservation Area.

6.2 Access / Highway Safety

The Local Authority's Highways Department has been consulted on this application and raises no objection in relation to highway/public safety. Similarly, The Welsh Government as highway authority for the A40 trunk road have no comments to make.

6.3 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales has been considered, 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 recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been taken into account and it is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

Reason for Refusal:

1 The proposed signage is considered to have a detrimental impact on the appearance and setting of the area by virtue of the material and illumination applied and is considered to be contrary to the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan policies DES3 and HE3. In addition, by virtue of the material and illumination used, the signage is considered to be contrary to the Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal and Section 160 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 as it fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area.