



FAO: Planning Department,  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2021/1634/LB  
Date: 25/06/2021

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: *Eight Bells, 2 Park Street, Hatfield, AL9 5AX***

The application is for the erection of illuminated and non-illuminated signs to the exterior of the building.

The property is Grade II listed and located within Old Hatfield Conservation Area. It is thought to date to the seventeenth century (although the listing description states “probably sixteenth century”) and occupies a prominent position on the corner of Park Street and Fore Street.

This scheme follows the refusal of a previous application for replacement signage (6/2021/0557/LB).

As noted previously, there are no objections in principle to the replacement of the existing signage and there is an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the building. It is unclear whether the existing signage benefits from listed building consent. The planning history shows listed building consent for new signage in the late 1990s (S6/1996/0737/LB) but nothing more recently and it is understood from photographs that the current blue and white signage was installed around 2015/6.

The proposed colours for the walls, woodwork, plinth and rainwater goods are acceptable. Care should be taken to ensure the paint for the walls is breathable (if the existing paint is) to avoid encasing the building in a non-permeable material.

Amendments to the scheme, following the refusal, have addressed some concerns raised previously, however, there are still elements considered to be inappropriate and their removal from the scheme is recommended (Sign C and floodlights).

Sign A – Timber fascia sign is now proposed so this raises no objections.

Sign B – Timber is now proposed so this raises no objections.



Sign C – The size of the mural has been reduced and wording removed. However, concerns were raised in comments on the last scheme that the date of 1226 is not confirmed; it is unknown whether 1226 is an accurate date for the establishment of the pub and whether it was in this location (in a former building). Advertising the history of the building on the panel sign (Sign D) is supported, but a large painted statement is not considered to be in keeping, particularly as the eighteenth century brickwork on this part of the building was historically unpainted and historically it appears to have been a shop separate to the pub. It is recommended that this sign is removed.

Sign D – Retaining the panel of historic information is supported. This panel should be painted timber and would benefit from some moulding detail or a bullnose frame to match the other signs.

Sign E – Timber is now proposed for the amenity boards, so no objections are raised.

Sign F – There are no objections to the poster case. The use of timber should be explored, although it is appreciated that this may not be possible for the poster case and it is considered an acceptable addition in order to advertise events and menus.

Sign H – There are no objections to the replacement and repositioning of the lantern lights.

Sign I – It is recommended that these lights are removed as the trough light will illuminate the pub sign. The existing uplighters are unattractive modern features on the elevation and the replacement lights will perpetuate this. There is an opportunity to improve the appearance of the building by removing these lights, particularly if Sign C is omitted.

If the above recommendations are followed there would be no objections to the proposal as it would preserve (and potentially enhance) the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the special interest of the listed building, causing no harm to their significance. However, as proposed, the works are considered to result in 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of both the listed building and the Conservation Area and paragraph 196 of the NPPF should be applied. Paragraph 193 affords great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. Consideration should also be given to Sections 16 (2) and 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 under which local planning authorities should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their special interest, and the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Yours sincerely

Maria Kitts BA (Hons) MA PGCert  
Senior Built Heritage Consultant  
Place Services

*Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter*