

TITLE: 24/01250/ADN

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 2 April 2025

Author: Planning Officer

Report No: Z162

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Site Address: Land At Church Way Little Downham Cambridgeshire CB6 2UJ

Proposal: Advertising Board

Applicant: Little Downham Parish Council

Parish: Little Downham

Ward: Downham

Ward Councillor/s: Anna Bailey

Date Received: 8 January 2025

Expiry Date: 5 March 2025

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reason:

The development, by virtue of its scale, location and design, would fail to visually protect, preserve or enhance the wider streetscene and Conservation Area. The proposal would form a prominent mass of development which would be to detriment of the open and rural nature of the junction at Church Way. The proposal is therefore, considered to be contrary to policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV 11 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 The application is being heard by committee at the request of Councillor Anna Bailey.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks the erection of an advertisement board that would consist of two panels, each measuring 1830mm(6ft) by 915mm (3ft) with an overall height of 1830mm (6ft). The sign would have two frontages that organisations could use to pin advertising to. The proposed materials would be metal and wood.
- 2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link [Simple Search](#).

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 No relevant planning history.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The application site is located outside the development envelope of Little Downham and comprises an open area of grassland that forms part of an island between Church Way and Lawn Lane. There are several trees on the site protected by the Conservation area, as well as the village sign and a bench within the centre of the island. The application site is situated within the defined Conservation Area, and the road sign to the south corner is nominated for the Local register of buildings and structures.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

- 5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Parish - No Comments Received

Ward Councillors - No Comments Received

Local Highways Authority - 29 January 2025

- On the basis of the information submitted, from the perspective of the Local Highway Authority, I consider the proposed development is acceptable.
- The information included as part of this application does not appear to materially impact the public highway.

Conservation Officer - 31 January 2025

- Objects to the application
- Located within Conservation area.
- The Village sign and the rare C20 Isle of Ely County Council road sign on the green are under consideration through the current Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List Project for inclusion in the ECDC local list.

- It is unclear what purpose this sign will serve: it is of a scale more of a hoarding than a notice board.
- It is also implausible that two panels measuring 1830mm x 915mm will be demountable as they are too large to manhandle and there is no storage on site.
- The NPPF states that 'the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed'
- This is a critical location in townscape terms, already occupied by two complimentary signs of heritage interest.

5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 19th February 2025, and a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 30 January 2025.

5.3 Neighbours – Thirteen neighbouring properties were notified, and no responses were received.

6.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)

ENV 1 Landscape and settlement character
 ENV 2 Design
 ENV 11 Conservation Areas
 COM 7 Transport Impact

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

12 Achieving well-designed places
 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.4 Planning Practice Guidance

6.5 Other

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

6.6

7.0 PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS

7.1 **Principle of Development**

7.2 [Regulation 3](#) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires that local planning authorities control the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account

the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. As this is within the Conservation Area, the heritage impact should also be assessed.

7.3 Visual Amenity & Heritage Impacts

- 7.4 Policy ENV 1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that proposals provide a complementary relationship with existing development, and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes, and key views in and out of settlements.
- 7.5 Policy ENV 2 of the Local Plan requires proposals to ensure that location, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and colour relate sympathetically to the surrounding area and each other.
- 7.6 Paragraphs 131 to 135 of the NPPF seek to secure visually attractive development which improves the overall quality of an area and is sympathetic to local character and history.
- 7.7 Policy ENV11 states that development proposals, within, or affecting a Conservation Area should be of a particularly high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
- 7.8 The proposal seeks to erect an advertisement board that will be constructed of wood and metal, which will be painted black and used by local village businesses to advertise events. A simple mock-up has been submitted, which lacks details of what the finished advertisement board would look like, considering its position within a conservation area. No details have been provided to confirm how the board would be positioned and oriented within its surrounding context.
- 7.9 The Conservation Officer was consulted on the application and concluded that the advertisement board would be of the scale of a hoarding board rather than a notice board for village events. The boards would be of an excessive scale and would be too large to dismantle and store when they are not needed on-site, which would lead to a permanent structure in this location.
- 7.10 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF sets out that 'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.' The advertisement board would be situated roughly to the south of the existing bench and village sign on a prominent and open piece of land as you enter the village of Little Downham. Based on the limited information regarding the design and positioning of the board, it would have a dominant and disruptive presence within the open and rural character of this junction.
- 7.11 It would, therefore, be considered that the excessive scale, in conjunction with the poor design would introduce new development that would be to the detriment of the open, rural setting that has historic value, and the advertisement board would fail to meet the objectives of policies ENV 2 and ENV 11 of the Local Plan that seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the streetscene and the Conservation area.

7.12 Highways

7.13 Policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended 2023) states that development proposals shall provide safe and convenient access to the highway network.

7.14 The advertisement board is located on a triangle island between three roads, known as Church Way, which is a B-classified road, and Lawn Lane, which is a C-classified road. The Local Highways Authority (LHA) has been consulted and concluded that they have no objections to the proposed development as the application does not appear to materially impact the public highway.

7.15 It is therefore considered that the erection of an advertisement board would be acceptable with respect to highway safety in accordance with policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2025 (as amended 2023).

7.16 Human Rights Act

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Equalities and Diversities

In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

7.17 Planning Balance

7.18 The application site is located outside of the development envelope of Little Downham

7.19 The application is considered acceptable from a highway perspective.

7.20 However, the proposed advertising board would by virtue of its scale, location and design fail to visually protect, preserve or enhance the streetscene or conservation area. The proposal would form a prominent mass of development, which would be to the detriment of the open and rural nature of this part of the village.

7.21 The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV 11 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 APPENDICES

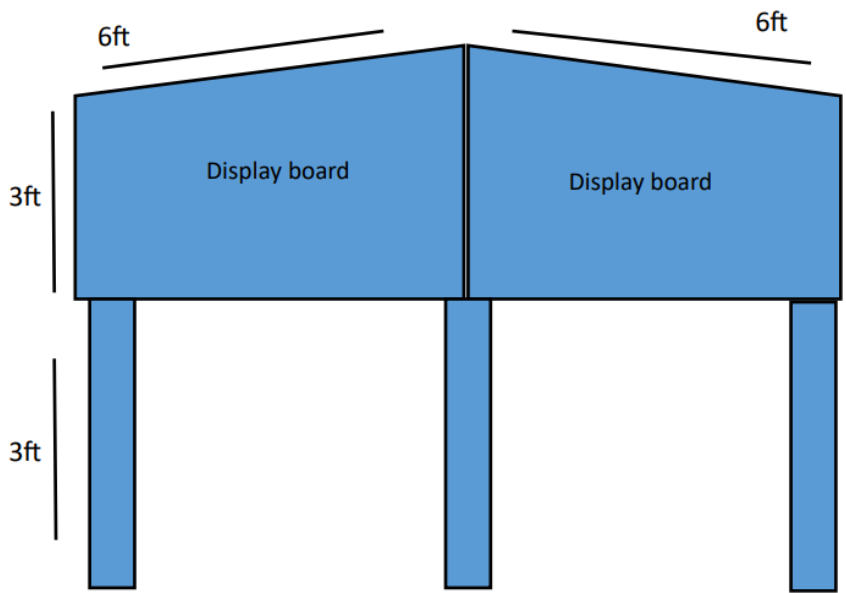
PLANS

The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.

Site Block Plan



Advertisement board Design



Size of the board will be:

6ft by 3ft

Will stand 3ft off the ground

Material will be metal and wood.

Board for organisations to pin advertising

Legs made from 50x50 mm steel

All painted black to blend in with the green

Can be removable when not being used

