

**WEST AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**7 November 2012**

**Application Number:** 12/02432/CT3 and 12/02331/CT3

**Decision Due by:** 15th November 2012

**Proposal:** 12/02432/CT3: Listed building consent for external alterations to display 4No. overhead avenue illuminated fascia signs in the High street, a wall mounted illuminated banner in Market street, a high level non illuminated fascia sign in Market Street, 4No. illuminated display boards within the Avenues.  
12/02331/CT3: Advertisement consent for external alterations to display 4No. overhead avenue illuminated fascia signs in the High street, a wall mounted illuminated banner in Market street, a high level non illuminated fascia sign in Market Street, 4No. illuminated display boards within the Avenues.

**Site Address:** Covered Market, Market Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire

**Ward:** Carfax Ward

**Agent:** Mr Ian Gordon

**Applicant:** Oxford City Council

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**12/02432/CT3: Listed building Consent Recommendation: (Note: because the applicant is the City Council the application is to be determined by the Secretary of State)**

**RAISE NO OBJECTION**

For the following reasons:

- 1 The Council considers that the proposal, subject to the conditions imposed, would accord with the special character, setting and features of special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity;

subject to the following suggested conditions:

- 1 Commencement of works LB/CAC consent
- 2 LB consent - works as approved only
- 3 7 days notice to LPA
- 4 LB notice of completion
- 5 Repair of damage after works
- 6 Details of equipment
- 7 Cabling details
- 8 Samples of materials

**12/02331/CT3: Advertisement Consent Recommendation:**

APPLICATION BE APPROVED

For the following reasons:

- 1 The Council considers that the advertisements would be appropriate for the proper advertising of the building in a manner that would raise its profile. The boards would aid navigation around the market. The Council has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity;
- 2 The Council considers that the advertisements would suit their visual setting in terms of scale, design, appearance and materials; they would preserve or enhance the visual amenity of the building; and they would not significantly prejudice highway safety or residential amenity;

subject to the following conditions, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 Avenue fascia signs max luminance
- 2 Banner max luminance
- 3 Display boards max luminance
- 4 Site maintenance of adverts
- 5 Satisfactory removal of adverts
- 6 No alteration to advert

- 7 Removal of existing adverts
- 8 Fixing of banners
- 9 Five year time limit
- 10 Permission of owner for advert

**INFORMATIVES :-**

- 1 Highway licence
- 2 Non peak hour installation
- 3 Archaeological advice

**Main Local Plan Policies:**

**Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016**

**RC14** – Advertisements

**HE3** – Listed Buildings and Their Setting

**HE.7** - Conservation Areas

**Core Strategy**

**CS18\_** - Urb design, town character, historic env

**Other Material Considerations:**

National Planning Policy Framework.

This application is in the Central Conservation Area. The covered market is listed grade II.

**Relevant Site History:**

90/00219/GFH - Curved entrance signs to Avenues 1-4; PER 18th April 1990.

**Representations Received:**

English Heritage:

'The case for making the entrances to the Covered Market more prominent is well made and English Heritage has no objection in principle to the works which require listed building consent. The proposed totem signs would add unfortunate clutter to the street scene, which is ironic as the Covered Market was developed to rid the streets of unsightly clutter. However, as these do not require listed building consent and do not form part of the application, we can only pass comment on these'.

Highways Authority:

No objections to the application as proposed but objects to totems on the footway.

The signs, banners and boards are to be erected adjacent to and above well-used footways in Oxford City centre's shopping and leisure area.

The proposed signs, banners and boards are outside of the highway boundary and where these are within the highway boundary a minimum height clearance of 2300 mm and a minimum clearance of 600mm from the kerb is achieved.

Objects to totem on the footway where this would reduce the width on High Street where there is a heavy footfall. Totems would adversely affect those with mobility impairments and would create risks to pedestrian safety where pedestrians could be forced into the road on this busy bus route and where considerable activity including loading/unloading occurs.

Pedestrians would also be re-directed towards the entrances to the Covered Market which would create greater conflicts between pedestrian movements and risks to pedestrian safety where there is a congregation of people.

#### Access Officer:

While the totem poles cut the width of the pavement down, they do have good colour contrast which would increase the ability for visually impaired people to see them. Many visually impaired people would be used to a busy town environment and would be aware of lamp posts, street furniture etc being on the kerb line. It is not ideal and would have made more sense in such a busy area to have had some type of hanging signage.

#### **Statutory and Internal Consultees:**

Highways Authority, English Heritage Commission, Oxford Preservation Trust, Access Officer.

#### **History**

1. The Oxford Mileways Act of 1771 was introduced to make the city's main roads safer and less cluttered and to rid the main streets of 'untidy, messy and unsavoury stalls' from Butcher Row (Queen Street) and Fish Street (St Aldate's). In 1771 John Gwynn was commissioned to prepare designs. His scheme was never fully implemented but 13-16 High Street (The Parade) of 1774 follow his plan.
2. The market was very successful, principally because the 1771 Act and a subsequent 1781 Act severely controlled the location of butchers, butter stalls and the sale of fruit throughout the city: a virtual monopoly. The market expanded throughout the latter part of the C18th and into the C19th. In 1808, 48 stalls were added but in 1823 plans to extend the market west were thwarted by the breakdown in negotiations between the market committee and Edward Latimer, the landowner, who berated the committee for short-sightedness and false economy. Eventually in 1842 agreement was reached and the erection of a 'more imposing and less congested entrance by way of Market Street' was achieved. The south-west end of the street, 1842-4, and the north-west end, 1845-9, were set back and rebuilt in accordance with plans by H J Underwood. In 1845, a corn exchange was introduced into the market but this was not successful and in 1863 it moved. During the latter part of the C19th, gradual reconstruction of the market took place and in 1894 it was substantially rebuilt.

#### **Description**

3. The market fronts onto both Market Street and High Street. The High Street elevation, which has three storeys, is composed of a formal classical C18th

façade with wide central pediment, sash windows on both first and second floors, the first floor windows being taller, and with three pedimented tripartite sashes spaced at regular intervals along the façade. Above the shop fronts is a stone string band. Over aisle four is one of the pedimented windows with balustrade that mark the entrance. Aisle one is an extension to the market, part of a building that has a different appearance and that is stylistically more late 17thC. The building is three storeys and rendered with projecting pedimented Serlian windows at the second floor level. The market entrance is articulated as a more traditional shopfront with timber shop fascias, rather than a string course.

4. The High Street façade, which has retail uses on the ground floor with the first floors in separate occupation and ownership, is part of a street that exhibits considerable variety in architectural form. The predominant uses are retail; projecting and fascia signs are part of the street's character. Further down the High Street the colleges and University buildings are more dominant. There are long views both up and down the High Street, the view west facing on Carfax Tower, the views east capturing its 'stream-like winding' (Wordsworth) framed by buildings.
5. Currently, there are projecting hoop signs over each avenue entrance, which now look a little dated and are attached rather clumsily with thick poles to the ceiling of each entrance. In long views up and down the street, the signs are not readily visible.
6. Market Street has a different character and a sense of being a medieval lane, with on one side the high wall of Jesus College and on the other the C19th additions to the covered market. This elevation of the market is more varied and has in part a stone façade with blind arcading and an off-centre main entrance and a white timber-framed skeletal structure that supports the extended roof of the market (perhaps a loading bay). In between, is a more recent, flat-roofed WC block that fortunately is mostly obscured in long views up and down the street.
7. Market Street provides access for deliveries to the market and there is a traders' loading area in front of the aisle entrances. There are no other signs on this part of the building. Because of the curve of Market Street this part of the market is not readily visible from Cornmarket and two projecting flag poles have been erected to announce the Market Street entrances. There are also two unauthorized high level signs on the timber framed part. The stone façade has been repaired and redecorated in 2011 which included the removal of a plethora of small directional and traffic enforcement signs and cigarette butt box.
8. The covered market was provided to remove market stalls from the surrounding streets and to tidy up and de-clutter the public realm. The design intent was that the market should be discreet and hidden from view. It is ironic that it is this characteristic that now makes the market vulnerable due to lack of awareness by casual shoppers, and thus greater prominence is necessary to increase footfall and to make the heritage asset more accessible.

### **Summary of the heritage significance**

9. The covered market has high integrity and is an important surviving component of Oxford's building stock, providing evidence of the development of the town. Its evidential value helps to explain the conflicts between traders, transport infrastructure and the need for the authorities to manage businesses in the town 'in the public interest'. The different phases of development of the market show how it expanded to address its popularity and to meet the retail needs of the town. Architecturally, the elevations are competent and contribute to the character and appearance of Market Street and High Street. Internally, the character of the market has special qualities and presents a very different experience to that of other shopping streets due to the market's scale of small units, its roof structure, levels of light, intimacy, noise and bustle. The market is a visitor attraction as a whole, as well as meeting a range of retail needs. The market has high communal value amongst visitors, residents and the traders themselves.

### **Sustainability:**

10. Assists with the continuation of listed building in the same use for which it was designed.

### **Proposals:**

11. The City Council wants to upgrade the existing signage at the four entrances to the High Street and at two locations in Market Street.
12. The City Council wishes to provide well designed signage that would reflect the individual nature of the building and of the activities taking place within, and would also attract and draw the attention of the public.
13. The High Street avenue frontages are not in the ownership of the City Council. The aim is to increase the prominence of the entrances and to provide some separate, limited information about the traders within the corresponding avenues. The resultant designs along the High Street are to update the high level, curved, projecting signage and to provide new monolithic floor-mounted signs to enhance and improve the visibility of the entrances.
14. The design approach for the Market Street elevation is to revise and replace the two high level signs for a design more in keeping with the existing design and proportion of the external frame and walling. In addition a new vertical banner style sign located near to the market yard entrance would be easily visible and nearer to the public viewpoint from Cornmarket. The challenges are:
  - The market does not have direct street frontages, ie shop windows, except at Market Street;
  - The lack of visibility of the market from principal shopping streets;
  - Poor marketing generally;
  - Poor public awareness of the range of goods and services available within the market;
  - Avenue entrances off High Street are flanked by buildings that are not in the control of the landlord;
  - These entrances are flanked by retail premises that have fascia and

projecting signs that reduce the prominence of the entrances; The plethora of unauthorised signs and A-boards that accumulate on or near the entrances;

- The quality of the public realm and management of servicing in Market Street and
- Servicing vehicles parked in Market Street conceal views of the entrances.

15. The Covered Market is a listed building and sits within a conservation area. This means that standard solutions are unlikely to be appropriate and proposals have been developed with the objective of enhancing the heritage value of the site.

### **Details**

16. To the High Street, the overhead avenue signs would be placed over each of the four entrances and replace the existing signs. They would read: 'Market' in individually cut lettering, set on a segmental curve projecting from the building line. The material would be polished Verometal bronze paint finish to the lettering with dull Verometal bronze paint finish to the supporting frame. They would be of fret cut polyurethane block lettering, supported on curved aluminium box section frame and mounting arms. Fixing to the building would be non-ferrous. They would be illuminated by LED trough lighting to illuminate from above and these would be integrated. Illumination would be low voltage with remote controlled located transformer and isolation control.

17. To Market Street, there would be a wall-mounted banner, double-sided, attached to the modern market building immediately adjoining and west of the listed building. It would be finished in Verometal bronze with white vinyl text applied to both sides, and integral LED trough light in the top projecting arm to light up both faces. The letters would run vertically, thus this will have a more modern character than the other signs. The advantage of the lettering running thus is that a large area of lettering is provided but in a less obtrusive manner than if it was to be set horizontally across an entrance.

18. Also to Market Street, the existing two sign boards would be removed at high level and be replaced by single letters reading 'Covered Market' in capitals, on the timber frame, to the side. Thus the sign would be visible from the west part of Market Street. The letters would be fret cut polyurethane supported on an aluminium box section frame and mounting arms. They would be polished Verometal with bronze paint finish to the supporting frame.

19. To High Street on the pavement there would be two totems that require neither Advertisement nor Listed Building Consent but are included for completeness. The totems would be placed opposite the entrances to avenues 1 and 3 so as to signal the entrances. These would be fabricated aluminium with internal galvanised steel frames, with flange plate fixings below ground floor to concrete foundation slabs. The material would be painted Verometal in dull bronze. There would be fret cut lettering internally illuminated by LED light source behind opaque toughened glass. Illumination would be low with remote controlled transformer and isolation control. There would be line illustrations to both faces showing the David Loggan map of 1675.

20. The current unauthorised plastic signs would be removed prior to commencement of the works and this would be an improvement.

**Officer's Assessment:**

21. The National Policy Planning Framework, Oxford Core Strategy and Local Plan share the objective of seeking to sustain the special interest of the historic environment. Policies recognise that change may be necessary to maintain the viability of heritage assets and to secure their future. If carried out sensitively and with understanding of the heritage values that a place holds, it is recognised that this can add interest. Where there is harm identified in any proposal, there needs to be a justification to show that the public benefits of a particular proposal outweigh that harm.
22. Care has been taken to choose locations that are respectful of the historic building. The materials would have a natural appearance, in keeping with the palette of the stone, painted timber and natural slate of the market.
23. The proposals would improve the visibility of the market and provide accessible information about the shops within, promoting the shopping experience within as single entity as well as a destination with historic interest.
24. Signage has been integrated into the design of the building, not just to be bigger and brighter to stand out from the rest. The architectural qualities have been capitalised and the signs are innovative and creative.
25. The highway authority has expressed concern that, the two totems on the pavement would be potential hazards to those with sight impairment. However the Access Officer has pointed out that people tend to use their sticks to tap along building fronts and not along the kerb. The totems would to an extent impede the pedestrian flow along the High Street for most pedestrians but this is offset against the advantage of the improved awareness of the market that the signs would bring. In any event the totems are not part of these applications and their installation is within the highway authority's control
26. The proposals are too small-scale to have significant archaeological implications in this location. However given the general archaeological sensitivity of the High Street it is suggested that an informative be added to any consent to allow opportunities for a watching brief.

**Conclusion:**

The signs would help sustain and enhance the viability of the Covered Market and thus assist with retaining the market in the original use for which it was designed. The proposals are designed with regard to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and subject to the conditions above, would be appropriate and well-designed interventions.

**Human Rights Act 1998**

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding



properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

**Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant consents, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

**Background Papers:**

National Planning Policy Framework  
Planning Policy Statement 5: Practice Guide

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**Extension:** 2148

**Date:** 26th October 2012

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