

25/01721/LBC Heritage Statement: Adam's Gallery / Julie Groves (2 pages)

42a High Street Reigate RH2 9AT

This application is made with awareness of both the grade II listed classification of the building and its location within the Reigate conservation area. We believe the external painting carried out is both suitable and appropriate to the conservation area and will enhance business viability.

We have found that an independent art gallery situated in the conservation area has been a welcome addition to the area and that to ensure its viability we need to draw attention to its presence. Importantly we have no frontage or shop window onto the street, meaning we are not an obvious addition to the businesses on the high street. For this reason, with the conservation classification in mind and reflecting a historical aesthetic, a hand-painted reference to the gallery was in fact appropriate to the original era and character of this type of building. Historically the building was covered in painted advertisements and writing for a fishmonger from 1919. We therefore are attempting to recreate something of the historical atmosphere that will also help to maintain the viability of our business.

We reference the following policies that we believe are relevant and apposite.

First, from the Reigate Local Plan:

Reigate & Banstead Local Plan 2019 Policy NHE9 of the Local Plan concerns Heritage Assets and requires new development to protect, preserve, and wherever possible enhance, the Borough's designated and non-designated heritage assets and historic environment. Policy DES1 concerns Design of new development and requires all new development to be of a high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings.

We argue that our hand painted sign, which is not a permanent change, is an enhancement of the character that is more in keeping with the original and vibrant character of these buildings. We therefore argue that we are making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Secondly from the Core Strategy 2014, which states:

The Reigate & Banstead Core Strategy was adopted in July 2014 and details the vision, objectives and policies for development in the borough. Under Valued townscapes and the historic environment, 5.4.1 states that: In parts of the borough, both urban and rural, historic buildings, townscapes, landscapes and other historic features have an important role in defining the local sense of place, character and distinctiveness. In addition to being of value in their own right they often bring associated social and cultural benefits. Historic environment features ('heritage assets') include listed and locally listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and

historic parks and gardens. The historic significance and contribution of these assets to the quality of place will be conserved and enhanced through the sensitive location and design of new development.

We argue that an art gallery with a vibrant frontage enhances the sense of place and historical context. It is the type of local business that respects local character and community and the artistic approach to the frontage is both in keeping and historically valid. As with the Local Plan, we remind the LPA of the historical context, the lack of permanence to the change and the high quality of a hand-painted frontage by a well-known local artist, which respects the conservation area.

With reference to the National Planning Guidance, we note the presumption in favour of sustainable development that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. If future generations wish to change the painted frontage it can easily be changed. It does however ensure greater viability for a well-loved local business.

We further note that national planning guidance places an emphasis on the viability of heritage sites. By increasing awareness of a local art gallery, run by a local artist this new painted frontage increases the viability of the business. Painted by hand as an example of local art increases a sense of local identity in this important conservation area.

We have tried to work towards the conservation area by putting back the building to its original state in terms of colour, which seems to have prompted the issue. The other minor painted alterations have been in place for some years and have not attracted a complaint. We hope these will be regarded as a sincere attempt to put right our breach of the planning rules. We hope the remaining painted additions will be regarded as a de minimus and a fair and reasonable level of business promotion. The building can still be easily returned to its completely previous appearance, but we argue this would now not be necessary now that the colour has been restored to the earlier state and that this is not a material change in planning terms.

In a time when many high street businesses are struggling it is important to enhance viability. As stated before, a local art gallery run by a local artist is a positive contribution to the conservation area. Given there is no shop window, the painted exterior is the only means to raise awareness of the presence on the high street. To remove this would be detrimental to the viability of a high street business thereby undermining the aims of national guidance to ensure the viability of sites of relevance to local heritage. A local high street of local businesses, particularly those of a creative nature, are surely a way to enhance viability and to make a positive contribution. Significantly no changes have in any way permanently changed the conservation area and can easily be changed at any time. In this way we also comply with the requirements of both the Local Plan and the Core Strategy.