

PLANNING COMMITTEE – THURSDAY 17TH JULY 2025

25/0901/ADV – Advertisement Consent: Installation of one externally illuminated "McDonald's" letterset, one externally illuminated "Golden Arch" to front elevation, one non illuminated sign to rear elevation, and 6 non-illuminated parking signs - at 94 – 102 High Street, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1AQ

Parish: Batchworth Community Council
Expiry of Statutory Period: 22.07.2024
(Extension of Time: TBC)

Ward: Rickmansworth Town
Case Officer: Scott Volker

Recommendation: That ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT IS GRANTED subject to conditions as set out at section 8 below.

Reason for consideration by the Committee: Called-in by Batchworth Community Council due to concerns with impact towards Conservation Area.

Application type: Advertisement

To view all documents forming part of this application please go to the following website:
<https://www3.threerivers.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=SWUSVVQFGM500>

1 Relevant Planning History

- 1.1 24/0829/FUL – Change of use from Class E to Mixed Use for restaurant and takeaway (Class E and Sui Generis); addition of HVAC plant, provision of vehicular access from Northway accommodating motorcycle and cycle parking with associated works – Permitted April 2025.
- 1.2 24/0832/ADV – Advertisement Consent: Installation of 1 no. acrylic white externally illuminated "McDonald's" letterset, 1 no. externally illuminated yellow vinyl "Golden Arch" applied externally to glazing, 1 no. projection sign, 6 no. parking signs and 1no. railing sign – Permitted April 2025.

2 Description of Application Site

- 2.1 The application site contains a two-storey flat roofed commercial unit located on the northern side of the High Street, Rickmansworth. The host building is currently vacant but was previously in use as a clothing retail unit known as M&Co. until 2023
- 2.2 The host building is located within the Primary Retail Frontage of Rickmansworth Town Centre which runs along both sides of the High Street and is located within the Rickmansworth Conservation Area. An M&Co advertisement remains on the fascia of the building despite its vacant nature.
- 2.3 The application site is principally accessed from High Street but does benefit from a side and rear stair access into the building. No vehicular access or drop kerb exists at the rear onto Northway.
- 2.4 To the north of Northway behind the application site is Penn Place which is a residential flatted development. Adjacent to the site on the High Street is a restaurant known as 'Masala Bowl' and a hairdresser 'Louvere', and on the opposite side of the road are 'Starbucks and 'Creams Café'. The High Street itself is generally flat, but the land rises gradually to the north such that Northway and the development beyond is set on a high land level than the High Street.

3 Description of Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application is seeking advertisement consent for the following advertisements and signage:
- 1 no. acrylic white externally illuminated “McDonald’s” letterset to the front fascia
 - 1 no. acrylic externally illuminated “Golden Arch” symbol to front fascia
 - 6 no. aluminium non-illuminated parking signs to railings
 - 1 no. aluminium non-illuminated panel sign to rear elevation
- 3.2 The proposed “McDonald’s letterset would measure 2.6m in width, 30mm in depth (protruding from the sign) and 300mm in height. The letterset would be externally illuminated from the top down. It would be located above the main entrance door within the front façade.
- 3.3 The “Golden Arch” symbol would measure 600mm in height, 85mm in width and 30mm in depth. The symbol would also be externally illuminated from the top down. It would be located to the left of the “McDonald’s” letterset.
- 3.4 The remaining signage would be located to the rear of the unit affixed to the rear wall and would comprise aluminium signs with applied vinyl graphics. These would all be non-illuminated. The 1 ‘McDelivery Partners Please Go Down the Stairs’ sign would measure 620mm in height and 550mm in width. The 6 ‘McDelivery Partners Parking’ signs would measure 700mm in height and 280mm in width.

4 Consultation

4.1 Statutory Consultation

4.1.1 Batchworth Community Council: [Objection: Call-in request]

BCC strongly object to this application. The property is in a Conservation Area and illuminated signs are inappropriate to the front elevation. Batchworth Community Council highlighted this in the previously approved application. There are other non illuminated suitable signs that McDonalds have used in other areas which could be used in Rickmansworth.

BCC would like to call this into Committee unless officers are minded to refuse.

4.1.2 Hertfordshire County Council – Highway Authority: No objection

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

Highway Informatives

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980.

Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx>

Comments / Analysis

The proposals include illuminated and non illuminated signs linked to a McDonalds store. None of the proposed signage is located on, or considered to interfere with, the highway fronting the site on High Street nor at the rear.

HCC as Highway Authority would not have an objection to the provision of an illuminated sign at this location. The standard of luminance complies with recommendations as set out in the Institution of Lighting Engineers Professional Lighting Guide 05/23: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays.

HCC as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal would not have an impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway and therefore has no objections on highway grounds to the application, subject to the inclusion of the above highway informatives.

4.1.3 Conservation Officer – [Verbally consulted – no objection]

Whilst officers recognise that written comments are generally provided for committee applications, the Conservation Officer had provided written comments for the previous application 24/0832/ADV where they raised no objection to the principle of the advertisements. Their primary concern was related to the “Golden Arch” vinyl fitted to the shop front glazing which is no longer proposed as part of this current application.

5 Public/Neighbour Consultation

5.1 Site/Press Notice: None

5.2 Number consulted: 9

5.3 No of responses received: 1 objection

5.4 Summary of Responses:

- Traditional “Golden Arch” should be replaced with aluminium/silver signage.

6 Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation

6.1 Legislation

6.1.1 The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

6.1.2 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

6.1.3 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

6.2 Development Plan Policy/ Local and National Planning Guidance

6.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

In December 2024 the revised NPPF was published, to be read alongside the online National Planning Practice Guidance. The 2024 NPPF is clear that “existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework”.

The NPPF retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits unless there is a clear reason for refusing the development (harm to a protected area).

6.2.2 The Three Rivers Local Development Plan

The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies CP1, CP9, CP10 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM3 and DM9.

Batchworth Community Council Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

Rickmansworth Conservation Area and Character Appraisal (1994)

7 Planning Analysis

7.1 Background

7.1.1 Advertisement Consent has previously been granted at this site under reference 24/0832/ADV. Application 24/0832/ADV included the following elements which also form part of the current ADV application:

- 1 no. acrylic white externally illuminated "McDonald's" letterset to the front fascia
- 6 no. aluminium non-illuminated parking signs to railings
- 1 no. aluminium non-illuminated panel sign to rear elevation

7.1.2 This current application differs from the previously consented scheme by the following:

- Omission of 1.no yellow vinyl "Golden Arch" which was to be applied to the glazing to High Street facing window.
- Omission of a 1 no. projecting sign to front elevation
- Relocation of "Golden arch" symbol to front façade.

7.1.3 All other signage proposed is as per the consented scheme.

7.2 Advert Regulations

7.2.1 Outdoor advertisements are within the scope of the control regime specified by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

7.2.2 This regime enables local planning authorities to control advertisements, when it is justified, in the interests of "amenity" and "public safety".

7.2.3 Amenity is not defined in the Regulations, although it includes aural and visual amenity and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality and the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

- 7.2.4 Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. It also advises that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety.
- 7.3 Design and Impact on the Streetscene and Heritage Assets (“Impact on Amenity” – Part 1)
- 7.3.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design the Council will expect development proposals to 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area'.
- 7.3.2 The application site is located within the Rickmansworth Town Centre Conservation Area. In relation to development proposals in Conservation Area Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD stipulates that development will only be permitted if it preserves or enhances the character of the area. Furthermore, it states that development should not harm important views into, out or within the Conservation Area. *The council will only permit development proposals including solutions to shop front security and/or use of standardised shop front designs, fascias or advertisement displays in a Conservation Area if they:*
- (i) Sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;*
 - (ii) Respect the scale, proportions, character and materials of construction of the upper part of the building and adjoining buildings and the streetscene in general;*
 - (iii) Incorporate traditional materials where the age and character of the building makes this appropriate.*
- 7.3.3 Policy DM3 outlines that generally totally internally illuminated fascias or projecting signs will not be permitted. The council will also not support applications for additional signs that would result in a proliferation of, and excess amount of, advertisement material on any individual building or group of buildings.
- 7.3.4 The Rickmansworth Town Conservation Area Appraisal (1994) states that only a small number of the buildings within the High Street are listed for the special architectural or historic interest – the application building is not one of those listed. The nearest listed buildings are 133 High Street (Dental Centre) and 74 High Street (W.H. Smith). 104-108 are all locally important buildings located next to the application site and on the opposite side of the High Street unit 153-155 and units 163-169 are also locally important buildings.
- 7.3.5 Policy CO7 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan sets out that the design of any new development will need to respond positively to the defining characteristics of the area within which it is located and reflect the associated principles set out in the Neighbourhood Design Code that are applicable to that area. Proposals that create new employment opportunities will be supported where their size, materials and design respects the immediate surrounding which they area to be located whilst enhancing the location to make it attractive for new businesses.
- 7.3.6 Policy DE1 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan sets out that new development shall respond positively to guidance and principles established in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Codes including but not limited to materials and development frontages and proposals that depart from this will need justifying.
- 7.3.7 The proposed signage (fascia) would be acrylic and would be akin to existing signage within the wider streetscene and conservation area and as such would not appear significantly out of character. This application no longer incorporates a projecting sign or a “Golden Arch” vinyl which is considered a betterment to the appearance of the commercial premises and the conservation area.

- 7.3.8 The signage at the rear would all be small scale and non-illuminated and be set off the public highway such that they would not be readily visible or prominent in this part of Northway.
- 7.3.9 Policy DM3 sets out that the Council will preserve the District's Listed Buildings and will only support applications where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment. Given the commercial nature of the premises, the limited scale of the signage and that similar signage is located in the immediate vicinity, it is not considered that the proposed signage would detrimentally impact upon the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings or Locally Important Buildings (Non designated heritage assets).
- 7.3.10 The proposed signage when read against other commercial buildings within the streetscene would appear appropriate and sympathetic and would not harm amenity. The Conservation Officer was verbally consulted on the application as they had previously commented on 24/0832/ADV where they raised no objection to the principle of the façade signage. They raised no objection to this current application as their primary concerns related to the "Golden Arch" vinyl fitted to the shop front glazing and the method of internal illumination initially proposed under 24/0832/ADV. This current application does not include the "Golden Arch" vinyl, and the fascia signs are to be top-down externally illuminated which is considered an appropriate and acceptable method of illumination within the conservation area reflective of other commercial premises on the High Street. A condition is attached restricting the hours of illumination of the advertisements to be on only during opening times of the premises.
- 7.3.11 In conclusion, subject to condition, the advertisements would be considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013), the Rickmansworth Town Centre Conservation Area and Character Appraisal (1994), Policies CO7 and DE1 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan (November 2023) and the NPPF (2024).
- 7.4 Impact on Neighbours ("Impact on Amenity" – Part 2)
- 7.4.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy states that development should 'protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space'. Policy DM9 seeks to ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on neighbouring or nearby properties as a result of lighting proposals.
- 7.4.2 The proposed alterations would not significantly alter the appearance of the building relative to the existing arrangement. The scheme of illumination of the fascia signs would be directed towards the façade of the building and would not result in unacceptable light spill. As such there are no concerns with regards to impacts to the amenity of the occupiers of any nearby residential or commercial properties.
- 7.4.3 Overall, it is not considered that the amended proposal would be imposing on any neighbouring residential dwellings or would result in an adverse impact on neighbouring residents which would harm their amenity. The development would be acceptable in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).
- 7.5 Highways Impacts
- 7.5.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 2007 (as amended) seeks to assess the impact on public safety.

- 7.5.2 Core Strategy Policy CP10 (adopted October 2011) requires development to make adequate provision for all users, including car parking.
- 7.5.3 The proposed signage would be applied to the façade of the building or located within the application site on the commercial premises. Given the location and scale of the proposed signage and its method of illuminance, it is not considered that the proposed signage would pose an obstruction to pedestrians or drivers. The Highway Authority were consulted on the application and raised no objection on highway grounds as they concluded that the proposal would not have an impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway, subject to the inclusion of a highway informative relating to prevention of obstruction.
- 7.5.4 It is not considered that the proposed advertising signage would result in any demonstrable harm to public safety in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and CP10 of the Core Strategy (Adopted October 2011).

8 Recommendation

8.1 That ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT BE GRANTED for that has been applied for and subject to the following standard condition:

- C1 1] The period of the validity of this permission is for five years commencing from the date of the decision notice.
- 2] 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.
- 3] No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to;
- (a) Endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (b) Obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - (c) Hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
- 4] Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.
- 5] Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.
- 6] Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.
- Reason: To comply with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011).

- C2 The sign(s) permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

Informatives:

- I1 The applicant is reminded that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 allows local authorities to restrict construction activity (where work is audible at the site boundary). In Three Rivers such work audible at the site boundary, including deliveries to the site and running of equipment such as generators, should be restricted to 0800 to 1800

Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

- 12 Obstruction of Highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.