

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	30 th June 2010		
Application Number	10/00973/LBC		
Site Address	Corsham Court		
Proposal	Supply and install four number information/directional signs relating to Bath Spa University		
Applicant	Bath Spa University		
Town/Parish Council	Corsham		
Electoral Division	Corsham Pickwick and Rudloe	Unitary Member	Cllr Alan Macrae
Grid Ref	387413 170680		
Type of application	Listed Building Consent		
Case Officer	Judy Enticknap	01249 706660	judy.enticknap@wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee :

This application has been referred to committee at the request of Cllr Alan Macrae, in order to consider the effect of the number and design of the signs on the special character of the listed building.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that listed building consent be GRANTED subject to conditions.

2. Main Issues

Corsham Court is a Grade I listed building and the south entrance to the inner grounds and attached pair of ranges are listed Grade II*. The application relates to proposals to erect 4 no signs. The main concern is the effect of the proposed signage on the special character and appearance of the listed and curtilage listed buildings.

3. Site Description

Corsham Court is a Grade I listed building. The main south entrance to the inner grounds probably dates from the C17, baroque in style and constructed in rusticated ashlar. It consists of a central entrance arch with massive ashlar piers supporting a pediment, flanked by 2 arched pedestrian gates to the east and west, to which are attached massive ashlar piers, and then the pair of ranges. Attached at right angles to the entrance arch are rubble stone walls which define the south curtilage of each of the ranges, each of which has a doorway with dressed stonework forming the opening to the respective curtilages and thus the south entrances to the respective ranges.

There is a formal garden area between the entrance gates and the main entrance to Corsham Court, which is defined by substantial stone walls. Access to the service area is to the rear of the west wall.

Bath Spa University holds a lease under which it occupies various parts of Corsham Court, including the two ranges each side of the south entrance gate as well as accommodation within the main house; access to the latter is via a door in the service wing. It has recently taken up

occupation, and this application is for listed building consent for the erection of 4 no signs. The principal sign is to be attached to the west pedestrian gate. Currently there is a sign attached to the east pedestrian gate which relates to the stately home, providing information to visitors to the architecture, gardens and also the Collection of paintings at Corsham Court. The proposed sign on the west gate would be 1000mm x 400mm, and would mirror the size and position of the east sign. It is a contemporary design, in stainless steel with acid etched text, and the University's name and logo at the top. The application also proposes to erect a sign 420mm wide x 300mm beside each of the garden entrances to the east and west ranges (on the side closest to the entrance gates); these are similar in design to the main sign with logo/name at the top. Finally, it is proposed to erect a sign of similar design indicating the position of disabled parking which would be attached to the west elevation of the west garden wall.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
09/1553	Installation of Fire Protection measures to 2 nd floor	Granted

6. Consultations

English Heritage: The archway has significant aesthetic value and any additional signage will have an adverse impact and should be kept to the minimum necessary. Question if the sign on the main gate is necessary; suggest placing the other signs on the side gates rather than walls and possibly having a low level sign on a pole by the disabled parking bay.

Corsham Town Council expressed concern over the number of signs and suggested the sign to the right range was unnecessary; no objections to disabled parking space sign.

Corsham Civic Society has no objections.

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour/interested parties consultation.

1 letter of objection received

Summary of key relevant points raised:

- The statement says the new signs proposed for the walls each side of the main entrance will replace previous signs. The sign to the west was on the opposite side of the doorway, and there has never been a sign to the east side.
- There is no justification for the sign to the east side. It is unnecessary, and detracts from the listed building, its setting and the conservation area.
- The main campus sign on the gate carries the University's logo. It is unnecessary and disproportionate for this to appear on the other signs – being confusing/misleading for visitors to the Court for the architecture/Collection/historic setting.

8. Listed Building Considerations

Government policy advice in determining applications affecting listed buildings is now provided by the new PPS5 and accompanying Practice Guide by English Heritage. Policy HE6 requires the applicant to consider the significance of the heritage asset, and assess the impact of the proposal as part of the explanation of the design concept, and the justification for the work. Policy HE9 requires the local planning authority to assess the proposal taking account of the significance of

the heritage asset, and the harm caused by the proposal, the more important the heritage asset, the less harm can be accepted.

The reasons for the proposal are stated in detail in the applicant's design and access statement. This explains that the design and extent of signage has been carefully considered to take account of the special character and setting of these important listed buildings. In particular, it acknowledges the need for the signage on the main entrance gate not to dominate the other sign, either in its appearance or by ascribing greater importance to the activities of the University compared to Corsham Court's importance as a publicly-accessible heritage destination.

Your officers consider that there is a clear need for the signage to the west wall regarding disabled parking, and also for the main sign to the front gate; the design of which is considered to be acceptable. Previously there was only signage associated with the use of the west range, which was positioned to the left of the entrance. The applicant has also explained that both the west and east ranges will be used by students, and consequently there is a need for small signs at both entrances. However, the applicant has agreed to reduce the length of each sign to 300mm with a pro-rata reduction in their depth; and for the signs to be repositioned to the south side of the entrances (this being the position of the previous signage relating to the west range). The University still want their name and logo on all the signs. However, with this revised size, the logo will only be approximately 100mm long, and the cumulative effect of the signage is not considered either to cause harm to the special character of the Grade II* listed building or its setting, or to give disproportionate emphasis to the University.

Recommendation

Recommend that Listed Building Consent be DELEGATED for approval following the expiry of the notification period for the following reason:

The proposed alterations preserve the special historic interest of the listed building in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and central government guidance PPS5.

Subject to the following conditions:

1. The works for which Listed Building Consent is hereby granted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No works shall commence until details of the following matters (in respect of which approval is expressly reserved) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority:

(1) Full details of proposed method of fixing signage to masonry and railings.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the details so approved.

Item 1 shall be completed prior to the use or occupation of the works.

REASON: In the interests of the listed building.

INFORMATIVE

1. This decision relates to documents/plans submitted with the application, listed below. No variation from the approved documents should be made without the prior approval of this Council. Amendments may require the submission of a further application. Failure to comply with this

advice may lead to enforcement action which may require alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised buildings or structures and may also lead to prosecution.

Plan References

A4 details of Sign 3 and Sign 4, A3 plans showing position of proposed signs, and site location plan received on 21/04/10: A4 details of Signs 1 and 2, and revised elevation drawings showing position of proposed signs received on 15/06/10

Appendices:	None
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	1.20; 1.26; 2.32; 4.02; 4.04; 4.05; 4.07

