

LETTER OF OBJECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE, ARUN DC.

AW/215/14/A; Morrisons resubmission for signage.

Dear Councillor,

The Friends of the Ship Inn ask you, as a member of the Development Control committee to reject the resubmission from Morrisons supermarkets for signage on their Aldwick store; the site of the Ship Inn in Aldwick village.

As you know, Morrisons have been in breach of planning permission since February when they erected 'temporary' company banners on the Ship Inn building. They also submitted a resubmission of their signage application which was originally rejected by committee last December, except for one externally lit hanging sign on the front elevation.

Arun officers decided not to take any enforcement action because Morrisons had made the resubmission which is to be determined by committee on Wednesday, 22 April. The company has offered no explanation to the Friends, Arun DC, or anyone else why they disregarded planning legislation. We can only conclude that they did it because they could. The Friends think this is an insulting, unfair and destructive attitude toward local democracy. It is the second time Morrisons have breached planning permission on the Ship Inn site.

Specifically, the Friends object to the following:

- The Morrisons Local M sign on the front elevation, externally lit. There is no advertising purpose to this sign. Motorists who might be attracted to stop at the store cannot see it until they are driving past, and then it would be too late to make a safe turn into the car park.

In any case, drivers coming from the west down Aldwick Street would already see a Morrisons sign externally lit on the west elevation of the building. We have no objection to this sign. Drivers would also see the previously approved hanging sign in good time before turning into the car park.

Arun's Conservation Officer responded in his ADC Planning Consultation on 25 March that the Ship Inn was a 'heritage asset' and he considered 'more traditional techniques would be appropriate'.

He proposed the front elevation sign wording should be reduced to 'M Local' . An alternative would be to retain a reference to the old ship and have a hand painted sign stating something like 'M Local at the Old Ship.'

In response Morrisons' agent, Mark Batchelor, told Arun on 31 March that there would be no change in wording and the sign would not cause harm to the Area of Special Character because it was in character with the surrounding area. Also, Mr Batchelor disputed the Ship Inn building was a heritage asset.

On April 1, the Arun Conservation officer unaccountably recanted his views and said

he now had no objection. Morrisons plans would have a 'neutral impact upon the property', he wrote. Members of the committee might like to ask the officer what suddenly changed his mind when Morrisons' agent had not budged an inch.

- East elevation (main entrance) signs. The Friends say the Morrisons logo sign above the front entrance should be reduced by 50%. Moreover, the other car park and opening hours signs on the building do not add to the advertising of the store but they look cluttered and out of place in the village environment.

The perimeter lighting around the ATM is very intrusive and overblown. The Friends wish to draw members' attention to the intense light pollution coming from the store's main entrance and the two 500w halogen floodlights when it is dark. The floodlights are exceptionally strong and spill light well beyond the car park. The strong light generated from inside the store and emanating from the entrance's glass doors, is also polluting the surrounding area, especially the flats opposite.

There is no doubt that the Morrisons store and its unlawful signage is out of character with the Aldwick ASC. There is nothing like it in the parade of shops opposite. The Morrisons store dominates, its signage is intrusive, it despoils the historic character of the building, and the store is creating light pollution.

We ask the committee to reject all the signs proposed in the Morrisons resubmission except for the one on the west end elevation.

Yours sincerely,

The Friends of the Ship Inn