

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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Response to 26/00680/LBC: Installation of 1no internally illuminated fascia sign, 1no non-illuminated hanging sign, a wooden chalkboard and repainting of external timber fascia to company branding colour at 13 Sussex Street Cambridge

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future consider that the internally illuminated fascia sign has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of this Grade II listed building and the wider Central Conservation Area.

The proposal is contrary to Policy 64 and Appendix H of the Adopted Local Plan. The policy explicitly discourages the use of internally illuminated box signs within the historic core. Such signs are often synonymous with generic, modern commercial branding that fails to respect the unique "sense of place" required in sensitive heritage contexts. The building is close to the intersection of Sussex Street, Hobson Street and King Street and is therefore visible from a wide viewpoint.

The design of the proposed box sign is physically unsympathetic to the architectural proportions of the shopfront:

- **Scale and Fit:** The sign not only covers the fascia but extends below it. This obscures the original architectural lines of the shopfront and disrupts the intended hierarchy of the building's elements.
- **Visual Dominance:** By hanging below the fascia, the sign appears as an additive, bulky "bolt-on" rather than an integrated component of the heritage asset.

Sussex Street is celebrated for its cohesive architectural character. The introduction of internal illumination creates a harsh, modern glare that is inconsistent with the traditional materials and external lighting styles typically found in this Grade II listed terrace. This would set a damaging precedent for surrounding units, leading to the gradual erosion of the Conservation Area's nighttime and daytime character.

We request that the Council negotiate a more traditional, non-illuminated, or discretely externally lit signage solution that respects the proportions of the existing fascia.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer