

Delegated Decision

Sign off Sheet

Ref. No:	DM/25/1093	Case Officer:	Andrew Horrell
Application Type:	Advertisement Application		
Proposal:	Replace existing signage with new almost like for like signage.		
Site:	The Co-operative Food, Whitemans Green, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5BY, ,		
Validation Date	28 Apr 2025	Overall Expiry Date:	20 Aug 2025
Pre-Commencement Conditions Required:		Pre-Com Conditions Date Agreed:	
Recommendation:	Permission	Recommendation Date:	17 Sep 2025
Target Date:	23 Jun 2025	Recommending Officer Signature:	Andrew Horrell

Date Legal Agreement Completed: (if applicable)		No of Representations:	1
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Signed and Agreed By:	Steven King	Date:	18 Sep 2025
Comments:			

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

DM/25/1093

**The Co-operative Food, Whitemans Green, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5BY,
Replace existing signage with new almost like for like signage.
CO-OP Ltd**

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

The neighbour at 3 Whitemans Cottage commented on the application that they are happy with like for like replacements but would have concerns if additional lighting is sought.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTEES

MSDC Conservation Officer (To the original plans): The application site is an unlisted building, the former Ship Inn, and now a shop, located in a prominent position within the Whitemans Green Conservation Area. The building appears, from historical map regression, to date from the 19th century or earlier, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, although it has suffered from some unsympathetic works including installation of vinyl to the rear of the ground floor windows creating a dead frontage. Some aspects of the existing signage are also unsympathetic, including the relatively prominent trough light above the main fascia sign.

The current proposal is for replacement signage to the front and side elevations of the building. In general, the signage appears similar to the existing, and although not entirely of the most appropriate materials, does include applied timber lettering to the façade, and updated, and visually improved, external lighting to this and to the projecting sign. On balance, these aspects of the proposal, and the signage to the side of the building, are acceptable.

I do have concerns however regarding the replacement vinyl to the ground floor front windows, which is more extensive than existing, and of a bland design which will have a significant adverse impact on the appearance of this prominent elevation of the building, creating a largely dead frontage onto the pavement at this key focal point within the Conservation Area. This aspect of the proposal requires reconsideration, to ensure that this part of the building responds more appropriately to the context.

Although planning permission may not be required for this work, the repainting of the joinery to the building in a dark grey colour also adds to the deadening effect of aspects of the revised signage. Ideally I would suggest that this should also be revised.

Following the receipt of amended signage details the Conservation Officer stated the following: I note we have received amended plans showing plain white obscure frosting to the ground floor windows. While this is far from the active frontage we would prefer to see, given the existing situation I think an objection to this revised proposal would be hard to sustain.

The remainder of the proposal is also acceptable. The application therefore now meets the requirements of DP35 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

PARISH COUNCIL OBSERVATIONS

No objection

INTRODUCTION

Advertisement consent is sought for replacement signage to the front of the building and within the car park.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

14/04176/ADV - Proposal to install 2 x fascia signs and 5 x car parking signs. Revised plan received 4/12/14 showing additional hanging sign from existing fitting. (approved)
DM/17/4167 - 1 x externally illuminated CO-OP projector, 1x set of non-illuminated acrylic "Welcome To" text, 2x externally illuminated CO-OP logos, 6x non-illuminated wall mounted flat aluminium panels. (approved)

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is within the centre of Whitemans Green and is a detached unit in a small parade of shops. The shop is characterised by white painted brickwork and hanging tiles and has existing non-illuminated and externally illuminated signage to the front and facing the car park.

The locality is characterised by a small number of shopfronts which contain a range of advertisement designs.

APPLICATION DETAILS

A grey painted timber 'Welcome to Cuckfield's Co-op' above the front entrance measures 2.664m in width and 0.19m in height. An identical sign to the side of the property facing the car park is proposed. It will be externally illuminated at 88cd/m².

An externally illuminated light blue Co-Op projection sign measures 0.72m by 0.85m. It will be externally illuminated at 125cd/m².

Front ground floor windows to be served by frosted vinyl, a first Floor Co-op Aluminium Panel is proposed.

Signage facing the car park area include a Disabled user signs which measure 0.45m by 0.45. A liability sign measuring 0.45m by 0.45m, a sign stating 'Keep Clear Deliveries only' measuring 0.6m by 0.6m and a 'Remember your reusable bags' sign measuring 0.45m by 0.45m

A front heritage aluminium projection sign measures 0.22m in depth, 0.65m in width and 0.0614m in width. The sign is to be externally illuminated at 94 cd/m²

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LIST OF POLICIES

Using this as the starting point the development plan for this part of Mid Sussex consists of the District Plan, Site Allocations Document and the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

National policy (which is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance) does not form part of the development plan, but is an important material consideration.

Planning legislation holds that the determination of a planning application shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Mid Sussex District Plan (Mar 2018)

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted at Full Council on 28 March 2018.
Relevant policies:

Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Policy DP26: Character and Design
Policy DP35: Conservation Areas

Site Allocations DPD

The SADPD was adopted on 29 June 2022. It allocates sufficient housing and employment land to meet identified needs to 2031.

No relevant policies.

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan (made October 2014)

Relevant policies:

CNP1 - Design of New Development and Conservation
CNP13 - Shop Fronts and Advertisements

Legislation

Town and Country Planning Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Other Material Considerations

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission Draft (Reg 19)

The District Council is reviewing and updating the District Plan. Upon adoption, the new District Plan 2021 - 2039 will replace the current District Plan 2014-2031 and its policies will have full weight. In accordance with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies of the emerging plan according to the stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF. The draft District Plan 2021-2039 (Regulation 19) is currently at Examination and stage 1 hearings were concluded on the 31st October 2024. There are unresolved objections to some of the Policies in the draft District Plan and as such, only minimal weight can be given to the Plan and this planning application has been assessed against the policies of the adopted District Plan.

Relevant Policies:

DPN8 - Light Impacts and Dark Skies
DPB1 - Character and Design
DPB3 - Conservation Areas

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Council has adopted a 'Mid Sussex Design Guide' SPD that aims to help deliver high quality development across the district that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide was adopted by Council on 4th November 2020 as an SPD for use in the consideration and determination of planning applications. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

NATIONAL POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024

Planning Practice Guidance

ASSESSMENT

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 states that:

'A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account - (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and (b) any other relevant factors'. Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest; and factors relevant to public safety include the safety of persons using any highway

(amongst others) and whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign (amongst others)'.

Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisement, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'

Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP27);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.'*

Policy DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan states:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*
- *Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- *Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- *Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.*

Development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area. New buildings of outstanding or innovative design may be acceptable in conservation areas provided that their impact would not cause material harm to the area.'

The ethos of this policy is echoed in policy CNP1 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy CNP13 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan states:

'Proposals for new shop fronts, or alterations to existing shop fronts, will be permitted where the following criteria are satisfied: a) The proposal would not result in the loss of a traditional shop front or features and details of architectural or historic interest; b) The proposal would be in sympathy with the architectural style, materials and form of the building(s) of which it would form part and the character of the Conservation Area; and c) Where a fascia is to be applied, it would be of an appropriate height which would be in scale with the overall height of the shop front and other elements of the building and would not intrude over the first floor level. An advertisement will be permitted where it would be designed, constructed and sited so as to preserve and enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas and would not cause visual clutter in the street scene, or cause significant harm to the appearance of any building on which it would be displayed because of its size, design, construction or materials'.

The comments of the MSDC Conservation Officer are outlined above, and the planning officer agrees that the proposal conserves the character of the Cuckfield Conservation Area.

The area is characterised by signage around this commercial unit and the petrol station immediately to the north west.

The proposal therefore complies with policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, policy CNP1 and CNP13 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Public Safety

Policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan relates to transport and states that development proposals should protect the safety of road users and pedestrians.

The signage is to replace the existing in terms of size and the proposed illumination is a reduction from the previous approved DM/17/4167. The proposal is therefore not considered to represent a hazard to public safety. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy DP21 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

CONCLUSION

The proposed replacement signage is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and location, would preserve the character and appearance of the Whitemans Green Conservation Area and would not create a hazard to public safety. The proposal therefore is considered to comply with Policies DP26 and DP35 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, Policy CNP1 and CNP13 of the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Decision: Permission

Case Officer: Andrew Horrell