

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Planning Committee: 21 March 2012

E/0313/06/11

ILLUMINATED SIGN ERECTED AT CEDAR FALLS HEALTH FARM, WATTS LANE, BISHOPS LYDEARD, TAUNTON

OCCUPIER: THE MANAGER, CEDAR FALLS HEALTH FARM

OWNER: UNKNOWN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider whether it is expedient to take Enforcement action to secure the removal of the unauthorised illumination to the sign at Cedar Falls Health Farm, Bishops Lydeard

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the receipt of comments from the Local Highway Authority.
No further action to be taken.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is along the main A358 road between Bishops Lydeard and Combe Florey. The sign is situated in a wall which surrounds the site and is positioned at the junction between the A358 and Watts Lane.

Watts Lane provides vehicular access to Cedar Falls and the sign can be seen when travelling from Bishops Lydeard towards Combe Florey but not in the other direction.

BACKGROUND

The sign was first brought to the Council's attention in 2010 when an application was requested and submitted. However the application was invalid and was returned to the applicant. The manager of the site at the time verbally confirmed that the illumination would not be switched on. This was adhered to until November 2011 when it was noticed that the sign was illuminated. A new application has been requested and several phone calls have been made but to date an application has not been submitted.

DESCRIPTION OF BREACH OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

A sign that is sited in the boundary wall of Cedar Falls has had illumination fitted to it which requires Advertisement consent under Schedule 3 Part 1 Class 2 2A (2) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

A number of applications have been received for this site including Planning and Listed Building applications. Advertisement application 06/85/0017, granted consent for a non illuminated sign adjacent to the A358 road to the west of Cedar Falls. This is not for the sign that is the subject of this report.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy, Guidance or Legislation

PPG18 – Enforcing Planning Control
PG19 – Outdoor Advertisement Control

Taunton Deane Local Plan 2004

S1 – General requirements
S2 – Design
EC26 – Outdoor advertisements and signs

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

An unaccompanied site visit was made on 7 February 2012 where it was ascertained that illumination has been added to a sign set within a stone boundary wall at Cedar Falls Health Farm. The sign fronts onto the highway to the south and is positioned at the junction between the A358 and Watts Lane; the latter provides vehicular access to the Cedar Falls complex, private residences and agricultural land.

Cedar Falls Health farm is a well established business that offers overnight and day spa breaks with overnight accommodation together with various leisure facilities. The built element of the site is set well within the site away from the highway and is largely screened by the stone wall and mature trees that line the A358. As a result the site is inconspicuous to passers by and navigation to the property by road is difficult to people unfamiliar with the area.

The sign is set within the stone wall and only visible to vehicles approaching along the highway from the South; it is of a traditional design with a green background and gold lettering. The illumination of the sign is unauthorised and within a rural location such as this it is generally recognised that the use of illumination should be kept to a minimum wherever possible. It is recognised that the need to attract business and provide direction to the property has to be carefully balanced against the potential visual impact and highway safety considerations of the sign and its added illumination.

In this instance, the illumination of the sign is considered to be acceptable given the discreet positioning of the sign and the fact that it will only be visible from one direction of approach. The sign will provide direction to visitors and potential customers at times of darkness whilst not resulting in significant harm to visual amenity or landscape character within the area. In addition when the sign is illuminated at times of darkness the perceived harm to highway safety, in terms of forming a distraction to passing drivers is not thought to be so significant so as to warrant enforcement action.

In preparing this report the Enforcement Officer has considered fully the

Implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER: Mrs A Dunford

PLANNING OFFICER: Mr R Williams