



Signage Scheme: Heritage Impact Assessment & Design and Access Statement

Anabella's
10 High Street
Ruislip
London
HA4 7AW

6th January 2024

This report should be read in conjunction with drawings and schedules, describing the "as found" and "as proposed" signage scheme for Anabella's restaurant. The application is a retrospective submission at the behest of Hillingdon Council's Planning Department Enforcement Team.

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Executive Summary

This report analyses both the recent “As found” and “As proposed” signage scheme for Anabella’s restaurant. It responds to an “Enforcement Notice” served by Hillingdon Council. It is an integral part of a formal application for retrospective Listed Building Consent and Advertising Consent for regularisation and improvement to an existing unauthorised signage installation.



A Previous Signage Scheme for Cafe Rouge

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1.0 PRECEPT

1.1 Background

Summary

- 1.1.1 Vernon Smith & Associates were engaged on the 6th January 2024 to assist the owners of Anabella's restaurant at 10 High Street, Ruislip to respond to an Enforcement Notice **ENF/698/23**, served on them by Hillingdon Council, following a visit by Planning and Conservation Officers. The Planning Officer required a formal application that also indicated improvements to the "As found" signage scheme. This report is part of the response to that requirement.

Format, Methodology and Scope

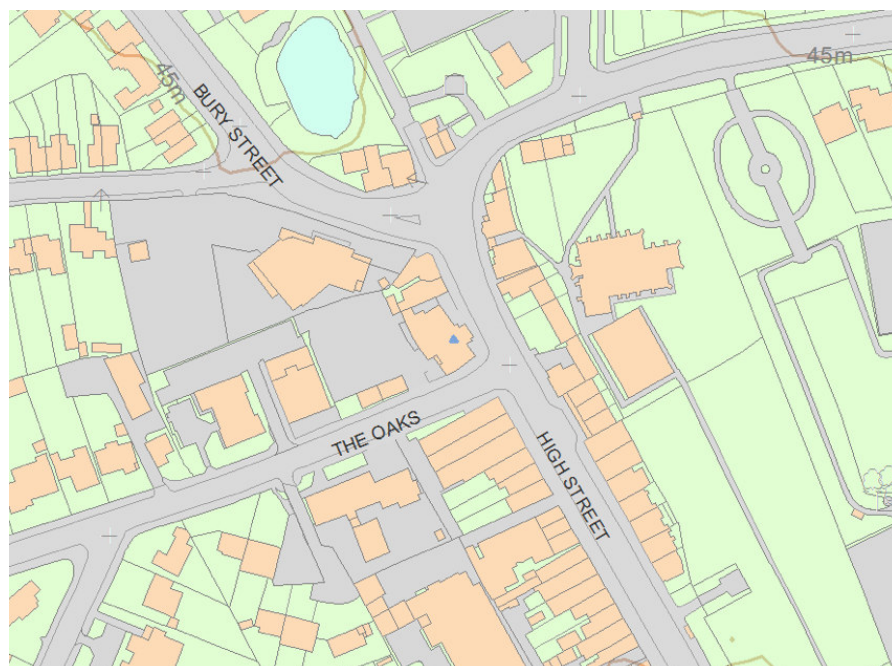
- 1.1.2 There is no formally adopted methodology for this type of response to a Planning Enforcement Notice but overall the aim of the report is to identify the impact of the works "As found" and as they are "As proposed" to outline and mitigate the existing installation.

The Signage Scheme

- 1.1.3 In principal, a signage scheme for a listed historic building is an acceptable intervention and signs have been an integral part of historic public houses for nearly a millennia. The issue however, is the design of the signage scheme and its potential to impact upon the character and significance of the listed building. The 'As found' signage scheme will be analysed for its impact upon the listed building and if required, mitigation will be proposed for the existing installation.

1.2 Site Location

- 1.2.1 Number 10 High Street is situated on a large complex junction of historic routes, including The Oaks and Bury Street, and it is at the medieval end of Ruislip's High Street. It sits in a relatively prominent position and because of this; it plays an important part in defining local historic character.



2.0 10 HIGH STREET - THE SWAN

2.1 Listed Status

- 2.1.1 The building was listed as Grade II in 1972, principally because of its early C17th provenance. The building is an important part of the Conservation Area and the character of the High Street at its northern end. The listing description is as follows:

Official list entry

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1285707
Date first listed:	06-Sep-1974
List Entry Name:	THE SWAN INN
Statutory Address 1:	THE SWAN INN, HIGH STREET

Details

1. 5018 HIGH STREET (West Side) RUISLIP The Swan Inn TQ 0987 12/248 II 2. Building of several periods. At left 2 ranges each with 2-storey, 1-window gabled end to road. The outer range C16, the inner one probably early C17. The inner range forms a left wing to the main block facing front, of 2 storeys, 2 bays with hipped tiled roof, sprocketed eaves. This block circa 1700. Modern right 1-storey wing with steeply pitched roof. All roofs of old tiles. The new wing of red brick, and the older parts pebble-dashed and painted except for tile hung 1st floor of left range. Windows mostly late C19 casements. At centre front a gabled shop projection.

Listing NGR: TQ0909687581

- 2.1.2 There is some anecdotal speculation that the building has a much older provenance than the listing description suggests. This may be the case but it is unlikely that the listing surveyors had sufficient time to establish this during the 1972 review. In any event, the “As found” signage scheme will have a de minimis impact upon the built fabric of the Old Swan, so its character and significance will not be physically impacted upon.

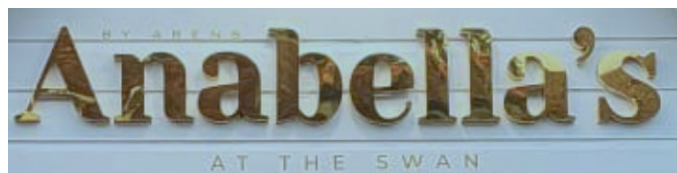
3.0 THE ENFORCEMENT ACTION

3.1 The “Works” General

- 3.1.1 The signage installation, subject of the Enforcement Notice **ENF/698/23**, is described in the following photographs. However, the Enforcement Notice is only concerned with the fact that the works are unauthorised i.e. were carried out without prior consent. The notice does not suggest or state that the signage scheme, or any part of it, is unacceptable and this would seem reasonable in light of previous signage schemes that have either received Listed Building and Advertising Consent or have not been enforced against!

3.1.2 Overall, the signs have a consistent design approach and in the main address many of the basic principles of good design in the historic environment as follows:

3.1.3 Front (East) Entrance Porch Gable



3.1.4 Front (East) Single Storey Extension



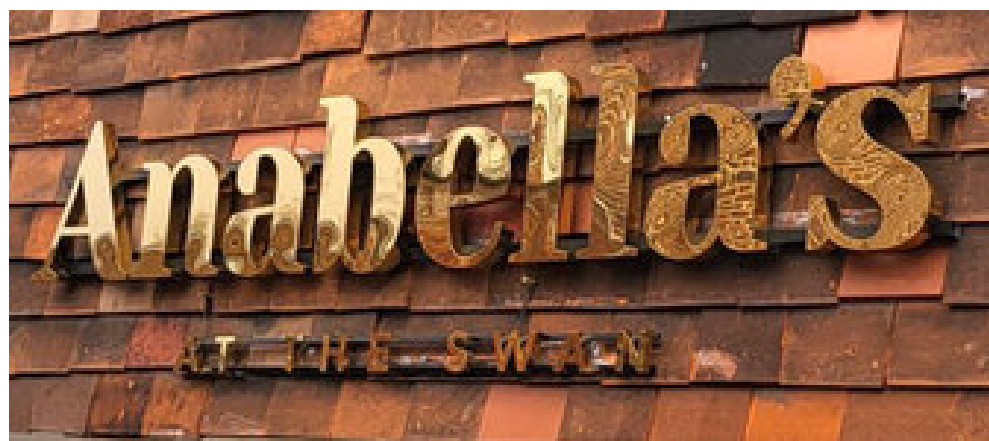
3.1.5

Side (South) Front (East) Two Storey Bay



3.1.6

Side (South) Elevation

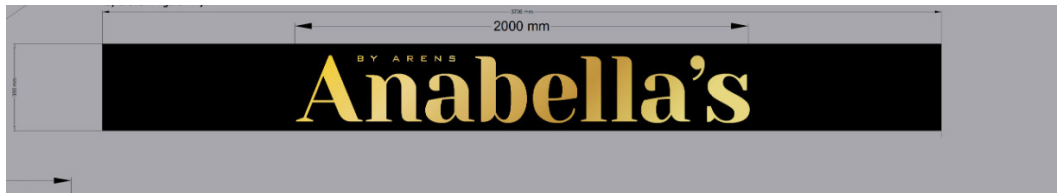


3.2 Design: Dimensions and Arrangement

3.2.1 Illustrated below are the design dimensions of the “As found” scheme now installed at 10 the High Street.

3.2.1.1

Front (East) Singe Storey Extension



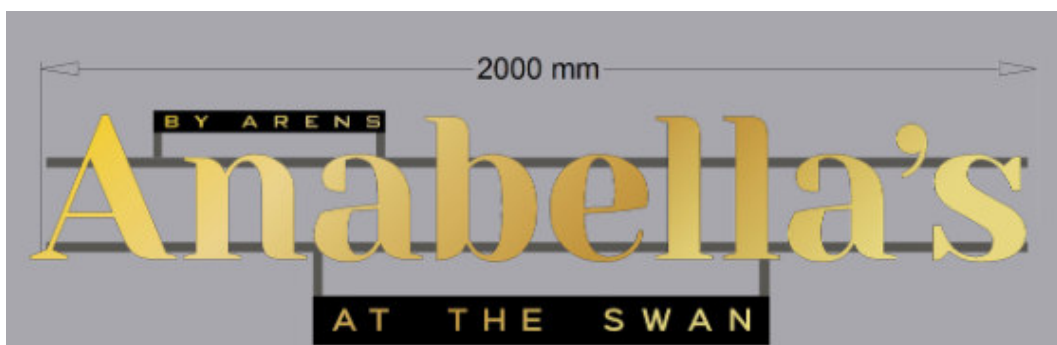
3.2.1.2

Front (East) Entrance Porch Gable



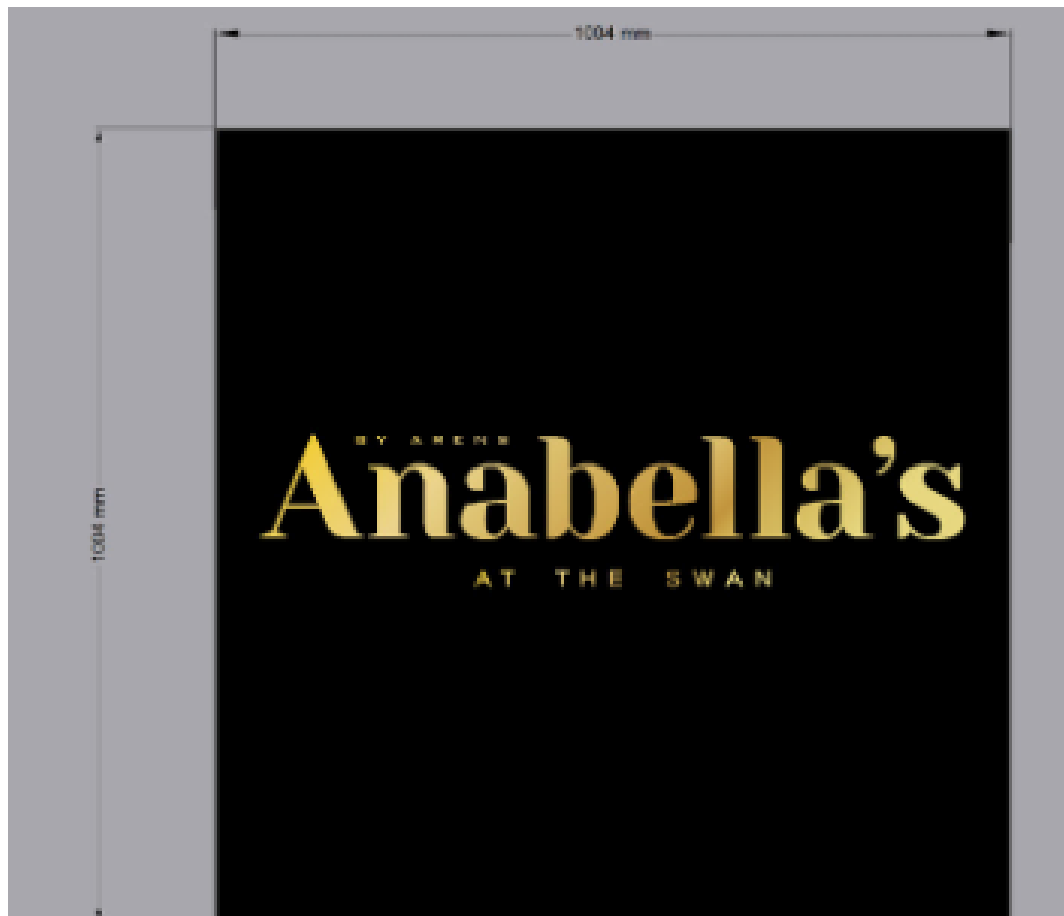
3.2.1.3

Side (South) Front (East) Two Storey Bay



3.2.1.4

Front (East) Hanging “Gallows” Sign



4.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1: HIA: General

4.1.1

All later works to a listed building will have a level of negative impact upon original “character” and “significance”. However, most historic buildings that have enjoyed a chronology of occupation will reflect an historic narrative in their fabric; unless they have been preserved as a monument. The best way to preserve an historic building is to ensure ongoing occupation and ongoing relevance to those occupants. This continuing use and contribution to the economy and vitality of London can be seen as “public benefit” in itself and contributes to mitigation for the interventions described in the enforcement action. As the .GOV revised heritage website 23/7/2019 describes, there are a number of public benefits that mitigate for impact on historic fabric and it states:

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- *sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- *reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.*

The applicant would assert that the signage scheme “As found” and as proposed, will cause less than “less than substantial harm” to the statutorily listed ex public house and the works will ensure that the building retains its “optimum use”. This will make the building relevant and attractive to local patrons and tourists, which in turn removes the risk of redundancy and long term neglect.

4.2 Signage: Good Practice in the Historic Environment

4.2.1

Fundamentally all signage schemes for listed buildings are reversible and as such mean that the additions can be removed and the small level of “harm” removed. This in itself is a positive factor in the assessment of impact. Despite this fundamental issue there are still a number of accepted principles in the design of historic signage that are applied to proposed schemes to reduce impact upon historic “character” and “significance”. These design approaches and principles are considered to inform the analysis of the “As found” signs, as follows:

4.2.1.1

Sign Writing

Hand painted sign written signs have a distinct historic character because they were the traditional way to manufacture signs. Up until the mid C20th there were very few alternatives to this technique. As with other areas and techniques in Conservation other approaches to the preservation of historic buildings have to be considered; particularly as many public houses and restaurants through out the UK with traditional and historic hand written signage are closing. It has been many years since the old Swan has had a traditional hand painted sign. Numerous signage schemes that have proposed alternative approaches have been approved at 10 the High Street since.

4.2.1.2

Individual Stand off Letters

Individual “Fret cut” letters mounted on stand off bosses or rails have been preferred within conservation practice for many years and can be seen in many Conservation Areas, not least Ruislip High Street. Individual letters provide the light and shade to an elevation that printed vinyl signs do not.

4.2.1.3

Top Lighting

Lighting of signage is a very important consideration in term of the preservation of “character” and “significance”. Separate over lights also contribute to a more expressive elevation during night time hours. Conservation practice has traditionally resisted signage that has integrated internal back lighting.

4.2.1.4

Size Proportion and Scale

Successful signage is not always the largest and most visibly obtrusive, and in preserving “character” signs should be proportionate to and balance with the features and forms of an historic building’s elevation.

4.2.1.5

Colour and Finish

The choice of colours for signs on historic buildings is a very important factor in preserving “significance”. The wrong colours and combinations of colours can “harm” the character of any building very easily. Traditional colours for public house signs are familiar to most people who live and work in the historic environment and they will recognise them subconsciously.

4.3 “As found” As Proposed Signage: Review

- 4.3.1 In light of the principles discussed above, it would seem that the “As found” signs at 10 the High Street, closely comply with many of the design approaches that represent good practice in historic environment management. The lay person in the street would understand that the signs are of a recent construction but would accept them as a normal design approach for a restaurant or public house. The current scheme demonstrates the following positive design features that enable it to preserve the Swan’s “character” and “significance”:

4.3.1.1 Sign Writing

The “As found” signs are not sign written and for a Grade II listed building it would be unreasonable to insist upon this technique for all public house and restaurant signage; particularly with the cost, delays and lack of sign writers still practicing.

4.3.1.2 Individual Stand off Letters

If a bespoke sign written scheme cannot be delivered, in terms of conservation practice, individual stand off letters are the preferred option and in the case of 10 the High Street the design delivers this feature.

4.3.2.3 Size, Scale and Proportion

The size, scale and proportion of the “As found” signs at Anabella’s are sympathetic to the listed building and appropriate for their function. The number of individual signs is also reduced from some previously approved designs for the Swan Public House. The retention of a “Hanging Sign” that reflects the old 3’x3” traditional pub sign contributes to preservation of “character” and “significance”.

4.3.2.4 Colour and Finish

The choice of colours for the “As found” signs reflect previous signage schemes for 10 the High Street and can also be found on signs in immediate and wider proximity of the public house. It is widely accepted that gold is a very traditional long established colour for public house signs nationally.

4.4 Planning Officer Visit: Specific design issues

- 4.4.1 The Enforcement Notice was not specific about the design considerations of the “As found” signage scheme but as suggested by the notice, the applicant requested a visit by the Council’s Conservation Officer. The officer suggested that the signage scheme in principal was acceptable and the design approach of the new signage was also acceptable. However, it was suggested that the high gloss nature of the finish was not commensurate with historic character and that if the finish of the gold lettering was of a less glossy nature the signs would be acceptable.

4.5 Design: The Proposed Scheme

The Proposed scheme

- 4.5.1 The applicant accepts that Listed Building and Advertising Consent applications should have been submitted prior to the installation of the new signage scheme and this application is to retrospectively rectify the omission. However, the applicant is also of the opinion that the scheme as installed, is acceptable within the historic environment and as affixed to a listed building for the reasons set out in Section 3.3 of this report. Therefore, the applicant is seeking Listed Building and Advertising Consents for the scheme “As found” on site.

Mitigation: reduction in finish intensity

- 4.5.2 Following the site visit by the Conservation Officer and issue of the signs being of too glossy a nature, the applicant has consulted with the sign designer and the finish of the lettering can be reduced to a satin finish using a special Kenair “Matting” product. The applicant will treat the signs with this product should a consent be forthcoming. It is expected that the treatment would be a condition of any grant of permission that may be issued.



Mitigation: Appropriate Design

- 4.5.3 In terms of overall design and composition, the signs generally display the appropriate characteristics to at least preserve the character of the listed building and the Conservation Area and planning officers have confirmed this.

Mitigation: Long Term Viability and Preservation

- 4.5.3 The history of The Swan public house is chequered with landlords coming and going having tried their best to ensure a long-term viable business within the old public house. However, in recent years restaurants and public houses have not been sustainable in the Grade II listed buildings, meaning that ongoing long term occupation has not been possible. The building was void for a considerable time and had it remained so any longer, The Swan may have joined the register of Listed Buildings at Risk, which inevitably leads to neglect and accelerated serious decline.

The new business at Anabella's is a high risk venture that needs to distance itself from previous failures, to ensure that potential patrons understand that a new experience is awaiting them inside. The building therefore needed a new identity, the new signage scheme is critical in sending this commercial message of change. The listed building can only gain from being a long term self preserving business; the longer Anabella's at the old Swan operates, the better the listed building is preserved!

4.6 The Sustainability Statement

- 3.4.1 This retrospective application is for the retention of existing signs at 10 High Street, Ruislip. The associated Sustainability Statement indicates that very little can be done to improve the sustainability of the existing scheme if it is to remain in place. However as the signs have been manufactured and installed, and cannot be used elsewhere or recycled, it would be unsustainable to now require a new set of signs, when the current unauthorised installation does in fact, preserve the listed buildings "character" and "significance".

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

General Principles

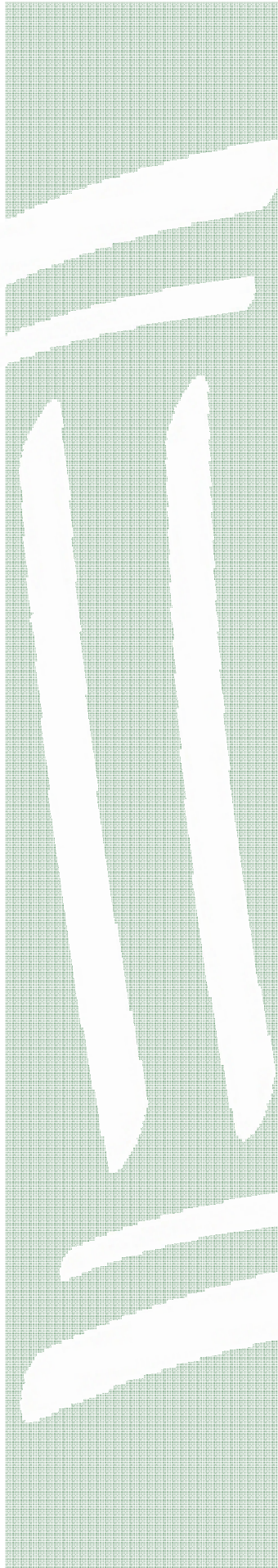
- 5.1.1 The applicant accepts that although the works have had a minor impact upon the "significance" of 10 The High Street, that impact is relatively minor and most importantly the interventions are reversible. The relative impact has been analysed above, assessed for impact and physical mitigation treatment has been proposed. The applicant considers that these mitigations will reduce further the impact upon the listed building character and deliver the compromise necessary to ensure the long term operation and viability of the business and thus the listed building.
- 5.1.2 Although ignorance is not a defence in law, none of the work carried out was malicious or instigated by the need to save money. Having received the visit from a representative of Hillingdon Council and the subsequent Enforcement Notice, the applicant has and is, making every effort to rectify the situation; hence this new listed building consent and advertising application.

5.2 Conclusion

- 5.2.1 The works to the building are required to ensure its long term viability and relevance to patrons and visitors to London in C21st. The building contributes to the facilities available to tourists in an historic part of London within a Conservation Area. The commercial mitigations for the need for a coherent signage scheme have been stated above. The applicant considers that these mitigate for the compromise between preservation, viability and the ongoing "viable use" of the building constitutes "public benefit" as described by the .Gov website.

5.2.2

Further to the physical mitigation, the applicant is of the opinion that the practical and physical interventions described and proposed in section 4.5.2 above, further mitigate for the unauthorised works and significantly reduce potential impact to less than “less than substantial harm”. With this in mind, the applicant respectfully requests that Hillingdon Council positively determine this application so that the remedial works can be carried out.



END

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