DELEGATED APPLICATIONS
ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION No. and SITE: WB/10/0977/ADV – East Lodge, Highdown, Littlehampton Road

DATE OF VISIT: 23rd March 2011

NEIGHBOURS CHECKED: Y

ADDITIONAL NEIGHBOUR CONSULTATIONS: N/A

PROPOSAL, SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is the splayed grassed verge on the east side of the junction of the access road to Highdown Gardens and Highdown Hotel, Highdown Towers with the A259 Littlehampton Road and adjacent to the hedged boundary of East Lodge, Highdown - a detached cottage paired with West Lodge, Highdown at this road junction. It lies within the Highdown Conservation Area.

The site lies within a predominantly rural area on the western edge of Worthing, on a natural south-facing slope of the South Downs. This area of open countryside, some 0.5 km west of the built-up area of Goring-by-Sea, is dissected by the Littlehampton Road A259 and by the access road to Highdown Gardens and Highdown Hotel Restaurant, Highdown Towers at this point.

Retrospective consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 is sought to display a post-mounted promotional advertising banner sign at this site in connection with Highdown Hotel and Restaurant. The sign was installed last year.

The banner sign is a pale blue PVCu sign advertising the Carvery at the Highdown Hotel Restaurant. It measures 1.8m high, 1.2m wide and 0.05m deep and faces westwards along the A259 Littlehampton Road. It is fastened to a black painted metal post-mounted frame at a height of 4.1m above ground level (2.3m to its lower edge). It is non-illuminated.

The banner is designed to be an interchangeable promotional sign advertising up to eight events at the Highdown Hotel and Restaurant throughout the year, and not just advertising the Carvery. The current banner lettering and the graphics depict 'Our famous £5.25 carvery' in red lettering and a pictorial of 'hot food.' The interchangeable banners would be of the same size and display, without illumination. The period of consent sought is 5 years.

On the west side of this road junction, on the grassed verge, is an externally illuminated post-mounted black painted aluminium signboard with gold lettering, advertising 'Highdown Hotel', 'Carvery Restaurant & Bars', 'Function & Conference Suites' and other facilities at the hotel, for which consent was granted in 2009.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

1977: Consent granted for a non-illuminated signboard at south end of drive adjacent to its junction with Littlehampton Road (WB/918/77/A); East Lodge, Highdown.

1982: Consent granted for sign on post advertising "Sterns Discotheque" and "Highdowner Restaurant and Bar" Illuminated by overhead lighting on Littlehampton Road frontage; (WB/637.82/A); East Lodge, Highdown

May 2009: Retrospective consent *refused* for a non-illuminated free-standing banner sign in connection with Highdown Hotel and Restaurant (WB/09/0224/ADV – *Dismissed on Appeal* 12th November 1999).

September 2009: Retrospective consent granted for the display of one externally illuminated post-mounted signboard adjacent to Littlehampton Road; (WB/09/0613/ADV); West Lodge, Highdown.

RELEVANT SAVED PLANNING POLICIES & NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

'Saved' Worthing Local Plan 2003: BE1
Worthing Borough Council's Submission Core Strategy (April 2010): Policy 16
South East Plan 2009: Policy BE6
National Planning Policy PPG 19 Outdoor Advertisement Controls (March 1992)
National Planning Policy PPS5 Planning and the Historic Environment (2010)

REPRESENTATIONS

None

HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 8 of the First Protocol (Protection or Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 is relevant to this application. It is accepted that this proposal, if approved, would have some impact on the neighbouring properties. However, it is considered that the level of development proposed would not cause undue harm in terms of additional noise, disturbance and loss of privacy and that, on balance, existing residential quality of life would not be adversely affected as a result of the proposal. Accordingly, it is considered that it is acceptable with regard to Article 8 and Article 1.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Under the above policies, outdoor signs will normally be permitted, so long as they would respect the predominant characteristics and appearance of the area, in terms of size, design, materials, means of display and positioning, and do not materially harm the character or visual amenities of the area.

In May 2009, retrospective consent was refused for a non-illuminated banner sign on the eastern side of the junction of the access road to Highdown with the A259 Littlehampton Road, on the grassed verge (WB/09/0224/ADV). The grounds for refusal were:

1. The advertising banner sign is detrimental to the predominantly rural character and visual amenities of the area due to its overdominant and discordant appearance in relation to the surrounding area and due to its unsympathetic design, materials and method of display in this prominent position in the street scene.

In November 2009, a subsequent appeal against this decision was dismissed by the Secretary of State for the Environment; and in refusing consent, the Inspector commented:

"I saw that the appeal site is largely surrounded by open countryside that forms a strategic gap between the urban areas of Worthing and Ferring. I consider that because of its size, height and exposed location, the banner display has an overbearing impact that spoils the amenity value of the verge and is intrusive in relation to its rural setting. It is an unduly prominent and to my mind discordant feature that detracts from, and materially harms, the established character and appearance of the site and the surrounding Conservation Area.

The site lies within a predominantly rural area on the western edge of Worthing. It also lies within the Highdown Conservation Area.

Due to its unsympathetic design, materials and method of display in relation to the amenity value of the grassed verge and the adjacent boundary hedge with East Lodge and due to its overdominant and intrusive appearance in relation to its rural setting and the Highdown Conservation Area, this alternative advertising banner sign, in my opinion, detracts from and materially harms the established rural character and visual amenities of the area. The proposed sequential banner signs throughout the year, which would be of the same size and means of display as the current 'Carvery' banner, would similarly adversely affect the established character and appearance of the site and the surrounding Conservation Area. Both these and the retention of the existing banner sign are unacceptable.

There is an opportunity to renovate and re-use the previous fixed sign's black painted metal frame and post at this site for the display of promotional posters for the Highdown Hotel, in a manner that would reflect the historic character and appearance of the site and its rural surroundings in terms of size, design, proportions, construction and materials; for example, a water-tight sign-case designed as an integral part of the existing post-mounted sign-frame inside which promotional advertising for the Highdown Hotel could be displayed conveniently, neatly and harmoniously in relation to the rural setting of the site and its surroundings would be a positive enhancement to the Highdown Conservation Area, this being an objective of the above policies and in particular of Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (2010).

In summary, this revised banner sign does not overcome the grounds for refusal in May 2009 to the previous banner-sign at this site, nor does it address the inspecting officer's findings in dismissing the appeal in November 2009, and is unacceptable,

Refusal is recommended.
It is further recommended that action be taken to secure the removal of this unacceptable advertisement.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse, on the grounds that:

1. The advertising banner sign is detrimental to the established rural character and visual amenities of the area due to its unsympathetic design, materials and method of display in relation to the amenity value of the grassed verge and the adjacent boundary hedge with East Lodge and due to its overdominant and intrusive appearance in relation to its rural setting and the Highdown Conservation Area. The proposed sequential banner signs would similarly adversely affect the visual amenities of the area.

REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION: N/A

IS THE RECOMMENDATION CONTRARY TO LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION: Y/N

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign.....Barbara Mose.....Date: 4th April 2011.....

Authorising Officer sign.....J Martin.....Date.....5.4.11.....