Planning Committee

Meeting Date:	**6 May 2025**
Contact Officer:	**Graeme Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer**

Waitrose Ltd, Greyhound Lane

P25/S0624/A

2 x fascia signs, 23 x panel signs, 3 x vinyl signs.

Reason for report:

☒ The officer recommendation is to object due to non-conformance with TNP/TNP2 policies, Local Plan, or national standards

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1. Officer Recommendation:

OBJECTS:

- The proposed use of internally illuminated signage is inappropriate in the Thame Conservation Area. This would be contrary to Local Plan 2035 Policies DES2, ENV6, ENV8 and TNP2 Policies CPQ1 and CPQ3.
- The proposed illuminated signage on the north elevation will be overlooked by lounge windows serving the adjacent Yeats Lodge. This would cause harm to residential amenity contrary to Local Plan 2035 Policy DES6.

  Comment: It is noted that the main signage has not been illuminated since the store was built. Highway signage such as that on the Aylesbury Road, North Street and Bell Lane already advises visitors to both the shop's function and location.

Call-In

If the recommendation is to object, or likely to be contrary to SODC's recommendation, the Town Council must agree whether to request that SODC Councillors call the application into SODC's committee. Thame's District Councillors are not bound to this request.

2. Key Issues:

All signage, aside from the proposed fascia sign on the North and East elevations, is considered acceptable. This report will address the proposed fascia signs which are both proposed as internally illuminated.

- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

  The proposed illuminated fascia sign on the North elevation (facing Greyhound Lane) will be in close proximity to the Churchill Homes retirement living flats. At least 6 flats have main or secondary windows serving their lounges overlooking the signage at an approximate 20 – 21 metres distance, which would harm their amenity.

- Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

  The site is in the Thame Conservation Area, however the building itself is not historically significant.

  Both fascia signs will be illuminated which is generally not considered appropriate in the Conservation Area, although the illumination of each letter will be internal which may help reduce the impact. The approach from Aylesbury Road is recognised as a gateway to the Town Centre. The proposed signage on the North elevation will be repositioned further to the right, presumably to move away from the landscaping provided as part of the Yeats Lodge development. If illuminated this signage will have a much greater impact during darker hours due to its increasingly prominent location.

  The applicant does not explain how the signage complies with conservation area policy.

  The proposed illuminated fascia signage risks causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3. Planning History:

Application Number	Description	TTC Decision	TTC Comments	SODC Decision
P14/S0149/FUL	Erection of external horticulture display units to front of store and associated works.	Approved	No comments	Granted
P25/S0727/FUL	Refurbishment of an existing customer carpark.	Supports	Subject to no objection from Highways and the Forestry Officer. Request for more cycle parking.	*Application under consideration*
P25/S0822/FUL	Alterations to existing plant at roof level and in the service yard.	Supports	Subject to no objection from Environmental Protection.	*Application under consideration*

4. Risk Appraisal

Dependent on the Town Council's recommendation to SODC is it likely that there would be a contrary decision by SODC? If so then a councillor should be nominated at the meeting to represent the views of the Town Council at the planning committee.

5. Policies Relevant to the Application

The following policies are of particular relevance when considering this application.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2 (TNP2) Policies

GDR2	Town Centre uses
CPQ1	Design in response to local character
CPQ2	Design principles for employment development
CPQ3	Town Centre design principles

SODC Local Plan 2035 Policies

DES1	Delivering high quality development
DES2	Enhancing local character
DES3	Design and access statements
DES6	Residential amenity
DES7	Efficient use of resources
DES8	Promoting sustainable design
ENV6	Historic environment
ENV8	Conservation areas
TC5	Primary Shopping Areas