

BRIEFING NOTE & APPRAISAL  
Restoration of Cambridge's Historic  
Advertising Signs

November 2012



## Background

This project stems from approval granted March 13<sup>th</sup> 2012 by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Sustainable Transport and Councils' Environment Scrutiny Committee.

There are many examples of historic signage that survive within Cambridge, most of these are adverts for previous or existing businesses and some are polite notices to the public. Many of the surviving signs are painted directly onto the masonry, sometimes onto a board that is attached to the building. They survive in a differing scale of condition, some have recently been renovated and some are barely visible.

## Objective

The objective of this project is to re-instate as many of the existing historic signage to their original condition around the city as possible using available Council Funding.

## Scope








The scope of this brief is


- Identify the different signs within the city and note their condition
- Set out the process in order to carry out restoration works
- Identify the constraints that may prevent signage being restored
- Identify any stakeholders and their role in the project
- Acquire rough cost estimates for restoring a typical sign
- Outline the decisions that will have to be made
- Set out details on handover of the signage once completed

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# 1. City of Cambridge Historic Advertising Signage

Photograph	Address	Location	Condition
	36 Sidney Street	Southern elevation	The lettering of the sign is in good condition. It is painted onto the side elevation and all the words can be read from a distance.
	67a Norfolk Street	Front elevation, facing southeast	The sign is painted onto the front elevation of the wall. There are few letters that are legible, and the overall sign is not very clear and cannot be seen from afar.
	85 Hills Road	Side elevation	This is a painted sign on the side elevation of a building. The background is in good condition but the lettering is illegible as it is fading away. It cannot be seen from a distance, but is better seen close up.
	86 Cherry Hinton Road	Side elevation, facing north	The positioning of the sign makes it difficult to see because it is to the side of the building in a narrow gap. The lettering is legible but some of the background is fading away.
	105 Cherry Hinton Road	Side Elevation	The sign is painted onto the side elevation of a building and it is legible. Its condition is satisfactory but some of the lettering is fading.
	Above Annabelles, Hills Road	Side Elevation, facing North	It is a painted sign on the side elevation of the building. It is in good condition, recently repainted. The lettering, background and image are intact. No work required at this stage.
	Above the Dragon, Mill Road	Gable end advert	The painted sign is located on the side elevation of the building. The lettering has faded away and all that is left is the background, which is in good condition.

	Coffee Company, Hills Road	Front elevation	The sign is not in good condition, the words are not legible as they have faded away.
	Cash Stores, Halifax Road	Gable end advert	The painted sign is positioned to the side of the building and it is in satisfactory condition. It is legible however the positioning of the sign makes it difficult to be seen.
	Cheeky Monkeys, Hills Road	Side elevation	The outline of the painted sign is still visible but the background and the lettering have faded away. The current state of the sign is very poor and it is continuing to deteriorate.
	Victoria House, Victoria Avenue	Gable end advert	This is a painted sign situated on the gable end of the building. It is in poor condition; the lettering is not legible and there is little evidence of the background.
	Guest Road	Gable end advert	The background is in good condition; it appears as if it has been painted over. The lettering is no longer visible
	University Cycles, Victoria Avenue	Gable end advert	The outline of the painted background is visible, but the lettering has faded away.
	Green Street	Front elevation	The painted sign is in good condition but it is starting to fade. The lettering is legible and it can be seen from a distance. The background is also visible.

	Perowne Street	Painted on boundary wall	The lettering of the sign can still be seen and it is legible, but there are some letters that are starting to fade.
	St Pauls Walk, Hills Road	Side elevation	The words have faded away but the background and design details are still in good condition. This has now had a board attached to the wall within the painted frame.
	Tenison Road, 2A - The Works (13)	Side elevation	This has recently been reinstated as part of a planning condition. No work required at this stage.
	The Globe, Hills Road	South elevation	The image and the lettering on this plaque are slightly visible at a close range. The main areas that are in poor condition is the background and some of the lower part of the image. This sign has now been superseded by a new decorative scheme for the pub which is now called The Emperor.
	Norfolk Terrace, Norfolk Street	East Elevation	The plaque sign is still legible close-up; there are however areas like the background, which is extensively damaged. The overall sign is in poor condition.
	The Eagle Bene't Street	Rear elevation	The letters outline of the letters is clearly visible. The pegs where letters were fixed to the stonework are also visible.

	The Eagle Bene't Street	Rear elevation	This is in good condition as it has recently been painted. No work required at this stage.
	The Eagle Bene't Street	Rear elevation	The sign is in poor condition. Some lettering of the sign can still be made out, but lots of it are starting to fade.
	The Eagle Bene't Street	Gate to rear	This is in good condition as it has recently been painted. No work required at this stage.
	Rattee and Kett Building, Purbeck Road	Rear elevation of the building, facing the Railway line	The images and lettering can still be made out. However the colours have faded and the paint is peeling.
	Gwydir Street	Canted bay and side elevations	There are a number of wall painted signs, with different levels of legibility. All of them have faded and are in a poor condition.
	Cockburn Street	Gable end	The border is clearly visible and most of the lettering is legible.

## **2. Requirements**

### **2.1 Budget Approval**

For the purposes of "testing" the process for delivering the project, a pilot scheme is being progressed. In the event that a larger "programme" of restorations is pursued following such a pilot, a larger budget will be required.

### **2.2 Planning Permissions**

If buildings are listed, Listed Building Consent will be required.

### **2.3 Authority to carry out works**

The City Council will need to ensure that the consent of all those with a legal interest in the properties has been obtained. This will include the freeholder, leaseholder(s) and mortgagee(s), if applicable ('Owners'). Identifying the Owners might be impossible if properties are not registered at the Land Registry.

Some Owners may take the view that the works will have an adverse effect in the value of their property. It must be made clear to Owners that the City Council will not be liable for that.

Works to some properties may require consent from owners of adjoining premises to erect scaffolding to do the works to the subject property.

Although not a property issue but is something that needs to be considered is that the City Council may need to obtain the consent of the owner of the art work before restoring it.

### **2.4 Carrying out the Works**

If the consent of the Owners, the adjoining land owner (for scaffolding purposes) and the owner of the art work is obtained (if needed), the City Council will be able to carry out the works by entering into a licence for works with Owners. Assistance in drafting such agreements will be required from the Council's Legal Team. Owners may require obligations by the Council in the licence for works, to cover:

- (a) that it has obtained all the necessary statutory consents (eg. Planning, Building Control, scaffolding licences)
- (b) the safe and proper management of the works
- (c) that the works will be done with reasonable speed, skill and care
- (d) to do the works in a manner that causes minimum inconvenience or annoyance to Owners and neighbours



- (e) measures against damage to property and people

### **2.5 Public liability**

If required a scaffolding firm will contact building owners to arrange the assembly / use of scaffolding to access signage. The firm may have to obtain permission from the County Council if the works are on the highway. The City Council may want to contact neighbouring properties to notify them of the works.

### **2.6 Highway Street works**

The contractor may need to book road space, an application to Cambridgeshire County may be required.

### **2.7 Interpretation of Signage**

The signage will have degraded over time including flaking and fading, some of the signage is in such poor condition that the original sign cannot be made out. There may be historic photographs that will give an indication of the original signage. The majority of photographs will likely be in black and white, so indications of the original colours will not be possible. A level of artistic interpretation will be required and the level to which this will extend will need to be agreed prior to the works.

## **3. Cost – Typical restoration example**

### **3.1 Finish and Materials**

Material – Egg shell masonry paint (Farrow and Ball)

Finish – None

### **3.2 Preparation**

Walls cleaned down and prepared

Bricks sealed – 2-3 coats of primer

### 3.3 Costs



#### Art work cost estimate

Company	Costs Estimate
Name withheld	£500 each
Name withheld	- None provided
Name withheld	- None provided

#### Scaffolding cost estimate

Site	Costs Estimate
Victoria House, Victoria Avenue	£650 + VAT
Bulls Dairies, Above Annabelles, Hill Road	£400 + VAT
Kingston Arms, Kingston Road	£400 + VAT

Note that scaffolding will need a pavement permit, the present cost is £90.10 for a four-week period.

#### Total Costs

*(does not include Council Officer time / wages, preparation costs for legal agreement to be confirmed if required)*

Victoria House, Victoria Road	£1370.10	+ Environmental Project Team Staff cost TBC
Bulls Dairies, Above Annabelles, Hill Road	£1070.10	+ Environmental Project Team Staff cost TBC
Kingston Arms, Kingston Road	£1070.10	+ Environmental Project Team Staff cost TBC

## 4. Stakeholders

- Building Owner
- Cambridge City Council
  - Streets and Open Spaces Team
  - Urban Design and Conservation Team
  - Councillors
  - Legal Services
- Cambridgeshire County Council
  - Highways Team
- Sign Writing Firm
- Scaffolding Firm
- Owners of adjacent properties

## 5. Prioritising Signage

Following completion of pilot schemes, a schedule of works will need to be drawn up that detail which signage from the list set out in Section 1 will be restored and in a specific date order.

How the signage will be prioritised will have to be decided and agreed with relevant members.

## 6. Procurement of Contractor

If the project cost is less than £10k a contractor can be appointed without more than one quote.

£10-30K three quotations will have to be received.

Projects worth £30K and above will involve a formal contract.

## 7. Project Management

The Street Works Team within the Streets and Open Spaces Service at Cambridge City Council will manage the project. A project officer will be allocated the project in which their time will be charged to the project. The Urban Design and Conservation Team will work closely with the Street Works Team up to the award of any works to a contractor.

## 8. Pilot Scheme

It is considered appropriate to carry out a pilot scheme in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost and adverse effects to further inform a larger project and address potential issues. In order to get the most information from this scheme an appropriate example should be chosen to take forward. This scheme should not be too complex in terms of approvals, works and access.

## **9. Level of Member Involvement**

At key stages of the projects members will be advised of start and end dates of works, including potential “unveiling” events.

## **10. Handover**

### **10.1 Legal agreement for maintenance**

An agreement will have to be drawn up with the owner for a future maintenance programme (like highways ones – called an agreement to maintain.) The City Council’s legal team should prepare the agreement.

The Council could, in the licence for works, include an obligation for the freeholder to maintain the works until it has disposed of its interest, there is a risk that freeholders will not agree to it.

### **10.2 Care Manual**

As part of the contract, it is suggested that the contractor provides a care manual on completion of the works for the owner of the building.

## **11. Timescale**

Subject to member approval, officers could immediately make contact with 2-3 building owners for the purposes of delivering a pilot scheme over the next 3-6 months.

Subject to the success of a pilot, a more detailed program can be prepared.