

Supporting Statement in Response to Consultation Comments

Application Reference: DC/26/0727

Bodywise Gym and Studios, 16 Church Street, Warnham

This statement is submitted in response to consultation comments received in relation to the proposed freestanding sign at Bodywise Gym and Studios.

1. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Sign

The proposed sign is intended primarily to improve clear identification and safe wayfinding to the site rather than to create a prominent advertising feature.

Bodywise operates as a wellness and fitness facility serving a wide range of users, including existing members, first-time visitors, consultation clients, therapists' clients, delivery drivers, contractors and visitors attending wellness services such as salt therapy and infrared sauna sessions. Many of these visitors are unfamiliar with the site and attend by prior appointment.

The entrance to Bodywise is located off Church Street and can be difficult to identify, particularly for traffic approaching from one direction due to the existing sight lines and position of current signage. Vehicles frequently slow, hesitate or miss the entrance entirely, resulting in unnecessary manoeuvring and confusion close to the access point.

The proposed double-sided sign is therefore intended to improve visibility and safe navigation for vehicles and pedestrians approaching from both directions along Church Street.

The sign is not intended to encourage casual "drop-in" trade, nor to create an overtly commercial presence, but to provide practical identification and safe access to the premises.

2. Design and Impact on the Conservation Area

The applicant has intentionally sought a design that is restrained, simple and sympathetic to the character of the surrounding village environment.

The proposed sign has been designed as a minimal monolith-style structure with:

- simple geometric form
- muted, non-reflective finish
- weathered Corten steel material
- no flashing, moving or digital elements

- no promotional messaging beyond the business name

The choice of weathered Corten steel was deliberate, as its natural rusted tones provide an earthy, subdued appearance that complements the surrounding brickwork and natural materials rather than introducing bright or reflective surfaces.

The proposal avoids oversized branding, excessive text, corporate colours, or visually intrusive commercial features commonly associated with modern signage.

While the sign will be visible above the boundary wall, its overall height remains modest at approximately 1400mm, significantly below building eaves, first-floor windows and surrounding rooflines.

It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the sign has been carefully minimised.

3. Clarification Regarding Illumination

The term “illuminated sign” may have created an impression of internal illumination or bright commercial lighting. The applicant wishes to clarify that this is not what is proposed.

No internally illuminated sign, lightbox, LED display or backlit panel is proposed.

Any lighting would be extremely subtle and limited to low-level external illumination only, provided by small solar-powered uplights installed at ground level at the foot of the sign.

The purpose of this lighting would be solely to provide minimal wayfinding assistance during darker winter hours.

Any illumination would be:

- warm and low intensity
- static (non-flashing)
- directed solely toward the sign face
- limited to softly illuminating the lettering only
- designed to avoid glare or excessive brightness

The sign itself is approximately 1400mm in height. Given its modest scale and the fact that any lighting originates at ground level and is directed upward only across the sign face, it is considered highly unlikely that material light spill would reach neighbouring windows or adversely affect residential amenity.

The applicant is willing to accept planning conditions restricting lighting specification, intensity or operating hours if considered necessary.

4. Residential Amenity

Concerns have been raised regarding visual impact and potential light spill toward neighbouring residential property.

The applicant respectfully notes that the proposed sign is a relatively modest freestanding structure and is not attached to the neighbouring listed property or boundary wall.

Due to the sign's limited height and low-level directional lighting proposal, it is not considered likely to cause material loss of amenity through light spill, glare or overlooking.

The proposal introduces no noise, no moving parts, no intermittent lighting and no additional activity beyond improved site identification.

5. Heritage Considerations and Planning Balance

The applicant acknowledges the sensitive location within the Warnham Conservation Area and adjacent to a listed building.

Care has been taken to ensure the proposal remains restrained in scale, simple in form and sympathetic in material selection.

Even where limited heritage impact is identified, it is considered to be at the very lowest end of the "less than substantial harm" spectrum.

Against this limited harm, the proposal delivers practical public benefits including:

- improved site identification
- safer access and wayfinding
- reduced vehicle hesitation and manoeuvring near the entrance
- improved accessibility for first-time visitors and service users

The applicant therefore respectfully submits that the modest and carefully designed proposal represents an appropriate balance between heritage sensitivity and practical functional need.

In light of the above, the applicant requests that the proposal be assessed in the context of its limited visual impact, practical operational benefits and willingness to accept reasonable conditions regarding illumination if required.