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**Statement to Planning Committee 10/03/21**

**20/04801/LBA**

Friends Meeting House York Street City Centre Bath BA1 1NG

External alterations for the installation of 4no. hand painted timber signs fixed onto side and front elevations and 1no. hand painted sign applied over existing painted signage to portico.

***Against***

***Please refer to our submitted objection which remains relevant to your consideration of this application.***

**The Trust fully supports the reuse and refurbishment of the building to house Toppings book shop.**

The principle of wall-mounted signs **in moderation** is potentially acceptable. We have not objected to wall mounted signs on the return walls of the portico. However, we consider the proposed size and volume of signage of a strident colour scheme, especially on the front elevation, to be cumulatively excessive and would result in a confused, cluttered appearance in sharp contrast with the building’s fine, unobscured appearance.

We maintain the importance of keeping the portico **free of visual clutter** as the focal centre point of the building’s formal, historic façade and a landmark feature in the streetscape. This includes the use of free-standing signs in this area, which would be better located on the raised pavement by the entrance.

We do not feel that the proposed signage has been appropriately tailored to its context and would instead be an over-dominant addition to the simplicity of the Meeting House’s classical façade, particularly the proposed signage either side of the blind doorway within the portico. The Trust continues to advocate for a bespoke approach to signage design that respects the special architectural interest of a listed building.

We regret that no further information has been provided regarding how the signs would be fixed, which should be a detail considered in this planning decision.

We maintain that a more positive balance between harm to a Grade II building and proposed public benefit could be found through the reduction in the amount of proposed signage, sensitive siting, and consideration of a more muted colour palette.

**We generally welcome consideration of potential signage alternatives as suggested by council officers that seek to sustain the Meeting House’s architectural and material significance whilst considering the viability benefits of advertising the Meeting House’s new use.**

**However, we regret that the application in its current form by virtue of the proposed siting and excessive volume of proposed signage to the principal elevation of the Meeting House would harm the special architectural or historic interest of a Grade II listed building and would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.**