

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/102/FP
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NOTATION:

The site is located within the Hatfield Aerodrome, Inset 3, as outlined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The masterplan for the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome site, as adopted in the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance dated November 1999 states that the “*creation of a District Centre is a key component of the overall development*” and that the “*area will become the heart of the scheme creating a sense of place within a high quality, safe environment*”. It is intended that the District Centre will contain, amongst other elements, appropriate shopping, food and drink, and health care uses, to serve the population of the new residential development.

The land covered by this designation is some 9.8 hectares adjoining the west side of Comet Way, located partly behind Waters Garage and Harpsfield Broadway, and stretching westwards to Mosquito Way, to include the listed hangar building. To the north of the District Centre site is the Commercial Area and the listed Administration Block and Canteen Block, whilst to the south are the Bishop Square offices and the recently rebuilt Beales Hotel.

This application concerns Unit 7 in Hatfield District Centre, which faces on to Parkhouse Court. The unit is classified as Class A1 and is occupied by the Sella Supermarket.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

This is a retrospective application for the installation of an aluminium framed shopfront powder coated in RAL 7015 with an electronic perforated lath type shutters powder coated in RAL 7015 and a sliding glass door at the Sella Supermarket, unit 7, Parkhouse Court, Hatfield District Centre.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1999/1064/OP – Outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome site in accordance with masterplan (including District Centre).

S6/2003/1137/OP – Full permission for 200 flats and Nursing Home, also outline permission for District Centre including shops, food and drink uses, hotel and health centre, day nursery, residential uses including affordable and key worker housing, bus interchange, servicing and car parking.

S6/2005/675/DE - Mixed use development of district centre comprising shops, food & drink uses, hotel, health centre, day nursery, 267 residential units including affordable and key worker housing, bus interchange, servicing, carparking and landscaping (reserved matters application following outline permission S6/2003/1137/OP).

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

- D1 - Quality of design
- D2 - Character and context
- D5 – Design for Movement
- D9 – Access and Design for People with Disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005.

REPRESENTATIONS

The Welwyn Hatfield Access Group requested that the application be considered in relation to Policies D3 and D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), Building Regulations Part M, BS8300 Code of Practice and BS5588 Part 8 Emergency Access.

In addition to this the application has been also advertised by means of a site notice and no representations have been received.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Quality of design**
- 2. Impact on ease of movement**

With regards to the quality of design, Policy D1 Quality of Design of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) is relevant to this application, in addition to the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance (2005).

The shopfront that has been installed accords with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), which requires all new development to be of a high quality of design, incorporate the design principles of the District Plan & Supplementary Design Guidance (2005), be appropriate to the setting and context of the area and be of the highest quality. The shopfront respects the character of the area through the use of modern materials and complements the existing elevations. It also reflects the existing features of the District Centre and aids in the creation of an essential rhythm.

The shutters that have been installed at this unit are perforated lath shutters. Whilst these shutters are not the Local Planning Authorities preferred security measure the Supplementary Design Guidance SPD states that they can be used if the unit is kept illuminated during hours of darkness. This is to allow for the natural surveillance of the unit by members of the public (as they will be able to see into the unit) and to aid in the creation of a sense of openness in the District centre, whilst helping to promote the image of a modern shopping area.

The level of natural surveillance into unit 7 is however limited due to the fact that shelving has been erected across the inside of the right hand side of the shopfront meaning that no-one can see into this side of the shop. In addition to this some shelving has also been erected on the left hand side of the unit thus reducing visibility into the unit even more. The fact that visibility into this unit is restricted detracts from the overall appearance of the District Centre, as it is not in keeping with the modern image we are keen to promote. In addition to this it does not contribute to the creation of a secure environment especially at night. Given this we have attached a number of conditions to this approval relating to the use of the installed security shutters in the interest of enhancing security and protecting residential amenity in the District Centre.

When considering the impact of the proposal on ease of movement, policies D5 Design for Movement and D9 Access and Design for People with Disabilities of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005), are relevant to this application.

The shopfront has been designed to allow for easy access to the store for disabled people as it has a wide entrance and a sliding door. The proposal therefore accords with Policy D5 which requires all new development to take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns and Policy D9 which requires that all new development should be designed to allow access by the disabled, young children in prams and pushchairs and those who are temporarily disabled through accident and injury.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed shopfront is in keeping with the character of the District Centre and aids in the creation of an essential rhythm in the Centre through the use of modern materials and a standard colour palette. Whilst the perforated lath shutters that have been installed at this unit are acceptable they will be subject to conditions to help enhance security and protect residential amenity. The shopfront has also been designed to allow for easy access to the store for disabled people and satisfies the requirements of the policies in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and the adopted Supplementary Design Guidance (2005).

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. The unit is required to be internally illuminated when the shutters are down.

Reason: To improve the visual amenity of the unit and promote a secure environment.

2. Visibility into the whole of the unit shall be maintained at all times.

Reason: To improve the visual amenity of the unit and promote a secure environment.

3. The unit shall at all times maintain a window display across the full width of the unit facing onto Parkhouse Court.

Reason: To improve the visual amenity of the unit and prevent dead frontage.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of FP (*Approvals only*):

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 D1, D2, D5 and D9), in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES:

None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan and plan of the Shopfront date stamped the 14th January 2008.

Photograph of shutter and shutter specification dated the 30th January 2008.

Signature of author..... Date.....