

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2008/170/AD</b>
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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 9 in Hatfield District Centre, which faces on to Parkhouse Court and is occupied by Mail Boxes etc and Hunters estate agents. Whilst the unit is classified as a Class A2 use (see planning application reference S6/2007/1495/FP) the unit will in fact operate as a mixed use unit, with part of the unit being used as an estate agent (Class A2) and the other part being used as a private post office which is a Class A1 use. Whilst this change would usually be dealt with under permitted development rights in this case it has been dealt with as an amendment to the S106 agreement, as this sets out the mix of uses for the development.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The proposal is for the installation of two internally illuminated signs (750H x 2845W x 95D) across the top of the unit at Mail Boxes etc and Hunters estate agent, unit 9, Parkhouse Court, Hatfield District Centre. The Mail Box sign will be white letters on a black background and the Hunters sign will be white and blue letters on a blue and yellow background. The level of illumination for each sign will be 250 cd/m<sup>2</sup>.

**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).

S6/2007/1495/FP – Amendment to reserved matters application (S6/2005/675/DE) to allow for internal alterations to units 3, 4 and 5 and for the subsequent change of use of units 4 and 5 to Class A3 and Class A2 respectively.

## **SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

D1 - Quality of design  
D2 - Character and context

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.

Hertfordshire County Council Highways department have been consulted about this application and have notified us that they have no objection to it.

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) Impact of the proposal upon the character of the area**
- 2) Impact upon public amenity**

The original application was for the installation of two internally illuminated fascia signs and vertical window lettering that would have been situated at each side of the shopfront. This application was however amended (at our request) to remove the vertical window lettering as it was deemed that this did not reflect the character of the District Centre and would create visual clutter given the amount of signage on a relatively small shopfront.

The Supplementary Design Guidance (2005) sets out the criteria that advertisements requiring consent must accord with:

1. Proposals should be well designed and sensitively positioned and should relate to the scale, character and design of the building on which they are positioned and not detract from the character of the street scene;
2. The advertisements size and position should respect the architectural features of the building;
3. Proposals that would create visual clutter would not be permitted;
4. Illumination should be carefully controlled and only permitted where it would not be visually intrusive; and
5. Consent will not be granted for any sign that would be a danger to public safety.

The proposed signage would not appear particularly prominent within the street scene and would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The size and position of the proposed advertisements also respects the architectural features of the building and should not create visual clutter. In addition to this, whilst the signs are

illuminated the level of illumination is not visually intrusive and will not impact on public amenity.

The proposal therefore accords with both 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 and Policy D2 which requires the character and context of the development to respect the area in which it is proposed, improving or enhancing the character of the area where possible.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed signage would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and is in keeping with the design of the District Centre. The proposed signage would not result in a loss of public amenity and is considered to meet the relevant requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

**CONDITIONS:**

1. C10 – Advertisements (1-5)

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:**

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

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 D1 and D2), 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 (drawing number WD/1050/05), Ground Floor Plan As Proposed (drawing number WD/1050/03), Ground Floor Plan As Existing (drawing number WD/1050/01), Reflected Ceiling Plan As Proposed (drawing number WD/1050/04), Shopfront Elevation As Existing (drawing number WD/1050/02) and Shopfront Elevation As Proposed (drawing number WD/1050/05) date stamped 11<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

Amended Plan - Shopfront Elevation As Proposed (drawing number WD/1050/05 A) date stamped the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

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