

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/574/LB
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the specified settlement of Hatfield as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is situated on the on the western side of Comet Way and southern side of St Albans Road West on an irregular shaped corner plot. The Ramada Hotel is located on a busy road network containing roundabouts with traffic lights and various buildings on each corner, including the Galleria, which is situated to the east (directly opposite the site).

The site contains a detached two-storey red brick building with a projecting centre piece with rounded end. The building is Grade II listed and identified as the Comet Public House.

The street scene contains a mixture of uses including residential, commercial such as hotels and the Galleria Retail Outlet Store.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks permission to remove the existing free standing signs and replace them with three free standing cylindrical signs. One would be placed at each access point and have dimensions of 3.5m in height by 1.5m in width. The signs would be internally illuminated and red and grey in colour.

This application differs from the previously refused schemes S6/2007/1315/LB, which had a split decision at Planning Control Committee on 22 November 2008. The neon feature line has been omitted from this scheme; however the dimensions of the free standing signs remain unchanged.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2007/1315/LB – Erection of one internally illuminated fascia sign and one internally illuminated neon feature sign – split decision part refusal and approval

S6/2007/1309/AD - Erection of three free standing cylindrical internally illuminated signs, one internally illuminated fascia sign and one internally illuminated neon feature sign – split decision part refusal and approval

S6/2007/628/AD -Erection of three free standing cylindrical internally illuminated signs, one individually internally illuminated fascia sign and one illuminated neon parallel feature sign – refused.

S6/1997/0754/LB – Erection of replacement signage on hotel building – granted.

S6/1994/0336/AD – Non-illuminated double sided post mounted sign – granted.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy
PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
GBSP2 - Towns and specified settlements
D1 - Quality of design
D2 - Character and context
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

BEAMS have indicated that the free standing cylindrical signs are inappropriate to their setting in terms of height, width and colour

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Hatfield Town Council – have objected to the proposals and commented that the proposals are totally out of keeping with the existing listed building.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 16/4/2008.

Site notice was posted and expired 22/4/2008.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. Impact on Character and Setting of Listed Building

Policies D1 (Quality of Design) and D2 Character and Context are both relevant, in addition to the material contained within the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Policy D1 requires all new development to be of a high quality of design incorporating the design principles of the District Plan & Supplementary Planning Guidance. The design of new development should contribute to the quality of design in the district, be appropriate to the setting and context of the area and be of the highest quality. Policy D2 requires that the development respects and relates to the character and context of the site and is sympathetic to any existing development.

PPG15 states that it is government policy to secure the preservation of historic buildings and this includes the desirability of preserving its setting, which is an essential part of the buildings character.

The previous scheme was refused due to the location, number, design and size, which was considered to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting, which would both dominate and detract from the architectural quality of the building and visual amenity of the street scene.

The main aspect of the previously refused scheme was predominantly due to the size, location and design of the free standing cylindrical signs, which together imposed a dominant form of the development, which detracted from the Listed Building.

However, the proposed signs within this scheme are identical to those recently refused at Planning Control Committee on 22 November 2007 and consequently; it is considered that the previous refusal for refusal is still appropriate.

The signs would represent an obtrusive form of development that completely detracts from the character of the Listed building and its setting. The choice of red and grey is harsh and dominant and combined with the height at 3.5 metres and width at 1.5 metres, it is considered that the signs are out of scale with the Listed building.

This was notwithstanding the current setting of the Listed building whereby it is situated on a busy road network containing roundabouts with traffic lights and various buildings on each corner. It is acknowledged that a degree of the setting to the Listed building has been reduced due to the above factors. However, the introduction of three illuminated cylindrical signs would only exacerbate the issues and create further clutter, which is not appropriate to the Listed building and its setting.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed three internally illuminated pylon signs are inappropriate due to their location, number, design and size, which detracts from the character and appearance of the listed building and its setting. Consequently, this fails to comply with Policies D1, D2 and PPG15 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)

- 1)The proposed free standing signs, by virtue of their location, number, design and size would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and its setting, which would both dominate and detract from the architectural qualities of the building and the visual amenity of the street scene. This is contrary to PPG15 and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan (1:1250) & 1099-B1 & 1099-B2 & 1099-B3 and date stamped 17 March 2008.

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