

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/2237/AD
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NOTATION:

The site lies within a designated employment area on the former Hatfield Aerodrome as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located within a well established employment area comprising mainly of B Class uses. The site comprises of a building used for vehicle servicing and office space with associated car parking to the front and southern side elevation.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal is for a number of advertising signs. Two signs are wall mounted on the external façade of the existing front elevation of the building. The remaining four signs are freestanding with one located at the entrance to the site, internally illuminated, measuring 5.2 metres in height and 1.8 metres in width. All the signs are a combination of silver, white and blue.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1991/0224/OP – Demolition of existing buildings; redevelopment of land and buildings for purposes within Classes B1, B2 and B8; improvements to Manor Road and provision of associated car and lorry parking. Withdrawn

S6/1992/0608/DE – Layout and construction of internal distributor roads. Approval of reserved matters Ref: S6/0223/91/OP. Granted 29/10/1992

S6/1994/0228/FP – Erection of industrial building (B1, B2 Use) Reserved matters pursuant to Outline Permission S6/0223/91/OP. Granted 15/05/1994

S6/1996/0053/FP – Erection of regional distribution centre (Class B8) and vehicle repair workshop (Class B1c/B2 Development). Granted 17/05/1996

S6/1997/0055/FP – Alteration to south west elevation by installation of windows at first floor level. Granted 25/02/1997

S6/1997/0201/FP – Variation of condition 2 of consent S6/0223/91/OP to allow a further three years for the Approval of Reserved Matters. Granted 09/05/1997

S6/1997/0651/AD – Erection of illuminated signs. Granted 02/09/1997

S6/2000/0536/FP – Erection of covered external staircase to existing warehouse. Granted 19/06/2000

S6/2000/1159/AD – Internally illuminated fascia sign, one non illuminated wall sign, and four post mounted signs. Granted 09/10/2000

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development

PPG19: Outdoor Advertisement Control

East of England Plan 2008
SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development
ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:
SD1: Sustainable Development
GBSP2: Towns and specified settlements
D1: Quality of design
D2: Character and context
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

Hertfordshire Highways do not object to the proposal subject to a condition. Given the proposal involves the installation of internally illuminated signs, the recommended condition will ensure that drivers of vehicles along the adjacent public highway are not dazzled or distracted, prejudicial to highway safety Hertfordshire County Council has no other highway issues as a result of this proposal.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

REPRESENTATIONS

This application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters and 0 representations have been received. Period expired 25th January 2011

DISCUSSION:

The Supplementary Design Guidance of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005, states in paragraph 6.1, 'For those advertisements that need consent, the Council as Local Planning Authority, can only exercise its powers of control in the interest of protecting amenity and public safety'. Therefore, the main issues in assessing this application is the impact of the advertisements on visual amenity and public safety

Impact on visual amenity

Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005 states that, 'The Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of high quality'. This also relates to the design of advertisements. The supplementary design guidance on advertisements states in paragraph 6.5 (i), 'proposals should be well-designed and sensitively positioned and should relate to the character, scale and design of the building on which they will be displayed'. Policy D2 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.

This area of Frobisher Way is characterised by large employment units. A number of the units have corporate branding both illuminated and non-illuminated which vary in scale and design. The existing employment unit is set back from the highway with a customer car parking area in between. The proposed wall mounted signage relate to the scale and design of the building to which they are attached. The proposed free standing signage does not form overly dominant features within the site. It is considered that the proposed signs would relate well to the character, scale and design of this building and maintain its visual amenity within the surrounding area.

Impact on public safety

Only one of the signs would face directly onto Frobisher Way, but all would be visible from it. A number of the signs are to be statically illuminated internally however the proposed

illumination in addition to their size and colours are not expected to easily distract road users and therefore are not a threat to public safety.

Other material planning considerations

East of England Plan 2008: On 10th November 2010, The High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to unilaterally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies in England on two grounds:

- That he acted outside his statutory powers in circumventing the need for parliamentary scrutiny of such a fundamental change to the national planning system; and
- He failed to consider the likely environmental effects of revoking Regional Strategies

However, the Government is still committed to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Bill, which is expected to begin its passage through Parliament before Christmas. In the meantime, the policies in the East of England Plan are re-established and form part of the development plan again and are therefore a material consideration which can be taken into account in reaching a decision. However, the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies is also a material consideration that could be considered to reduce the weight to be attached to policies in Regional Spatial Strategies.

The application has been considered against policies in the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the Borough but that the weight accorded to these policies, in light of the above circumstances, has been carefully considered in reaching a decision.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed signage would not impact on highway safety and would not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of its surrounding environment

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

Application S6/2010/2237/AD should be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1-5. C.10

6. C.10.1 – External Illumination Limitation

7. C.13.1 – Development in accordance with the approved plans

Site Location Plan (1:1250) Proposed Signage Page 2 of 4 & Proposed Signage Page 3 of 4 & Proposed Signage 4 of 4 received and dated 8th December 2010

8. The intensity of illumination shall be controlled at a level that is within the limit recommended by the Institution of Lighting Engineers in the publication "Brightness of illuminated Advertisements" ILE Technical Report No.5.

REASON: To ensure that drivers of vehicles along the adjacent Frobisher Way are not dazzled or distracted, leading to interference to the free and safe flow of traffic along the highway.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of FP:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1 and PPG14, East of England Plan 2008 policies SD1 and ENV7 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision 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).

Signature of author.....

Date.....