

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2011/0578/AD
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NOTATION:

The site is located within the town of Hatfield as designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site consist of an area of grass verge situated adjacent to the surface car park which serves the Parkhouse Court District Centre. An Aldi supermarket is located approximately 80m west of the application site on the opposite side of the car park. Comet Way (A1001) and The Galleria outlet centre are located to the east.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

This application seeks advertisement consent for the erection of double faced internally illuminated Aldi 'H-mounted' sign to include Parkhouse Court directional sign. The sign including the supporting poles would measure approximately 5.5m in height x 2.6m width. The supporting poles would be galvanised steel finished in RAL 7016 Anthracite. The Aldi sign panel would be constructed from polycarbonate and finished with a double faced screen with a printed five colour foil logo. The sign would be internally illuminated by LEDs.

PLANNING HISTORY:

Planning history relevant to the current application:

S6/2009/0347/PA – Installation of Illuminated Sign (15/04/2009)

Summary of pr-application advice:

Despite the reduction in the scale of the proposed sign, the revised scheme fails to overcome the reasons for refusal of application S6/2008/0150/FP as it does not adequately relate to the Aldi store by virtue of approximately 80m separation. The proposed sign would result in visual clutter along Comet Way resulting in a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.

S6/2008/0150/FP – Erection of 1 No. Internally Illuminated H-Mounted Sign (Refused 20/03/2008)

Summary of reasons for refusal:

1. The scale of the proposed H-mounted sign would result in a feature visually dominant within the streetscene and does not adequately relate to the Aldi store by virtue of approximately 80m separation. The proposed sign would result in visual clutter along Comet Way resulting in a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.

S6/2007/1220/AD – Erection of an Internally Illuminated Sign on the Entrance Screen and an Internally Illuminated ‘H-Mounted’ Sign (Withdrawn)

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) (Granted).

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Planning Policy:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

PPG19 Outdoor Advertisement Control

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development

D1 Quality of Design

D2 Character and Context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Hatfield Town Council – No response (consultation expired 27/04/2011)

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour notification letters. One representation were received which commented that existing signage was misleading and that people pass the District Centre without knowing how to get to it.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. The impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding environment and highway safety
2. Protected Species

1. The impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding environment and highway safety

The Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 indicates the criteria that advertisements should accord with, this includes: (i) proposals should be well-designed and should relate to the character, scale and design of the building on which they are displayed; (ii) the size and position of the signs should respect the architectural features of the buildings on which they are displayed; (iii) proposals should not create visual clutter; (Viii) Consent will not be granted for any sign that would be a danger to public safety.

The sign would be situated within a grass verge between Comet Way to the east and the car park which serves Parkhouse Court to the west. The total height of the signage currently proposed is the same as the previously refused application. However, the current proposal features a more compact ‘Aldi’ sign positioned beneath a separate sign that reads ‘Parkhouse Court’. A directional sign incorporating an arrow and ‘3rd Left’ has also been included beneath the Aldi sign. Pre-application discussions with Aldi regarding a different signage proposal were

considered unacceptable despite the reduction in the scale of the proposed sign to 3.5m in height. In order to accommodate signage for Parkhouse court, the current proposal has increased by 2m in height.

The Council recognises the importance of effective advertisement in attracting trade and ensuring the vitality and viability of Parkhouse Court and in principle a form of signage would be acceptable in this location. However, the differences between the current application and the refused application aren't so significant to overcome previous reason for refusal and it is recommended that express advertisement consent is refused due to the impact on visual amenity.

The sign does not adequately relate to the Aldi store by virtue of approximately 80m separation and would result in visual clutter along Comet Way. At 5.5m in height the proposed sign would form a prominent addition in the street scene. It is considered that the proposed sign, by virtue of its scale and siting, would not be well-designed or sensitively positioned. It would form a dominant and incongruous addition that would fail to maintain the established character and appearance of the area and would, therefore, detract from the visual amenity of the street scene contrary to point (i). The proposed development therefore fails to overcome the reason for refusal of application S6/2008/0150/FP contrary to PPG19, Policies D1 and D2 of the Hertfordshire of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance.

2. Protected Species

The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05. In the UK the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive is implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Conservation Regulations 2010). Where a European Protected Species ('EPS') might be affected by a development, it is necessary to have regard to Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations 2010, which states: *"a competent authority, in exercising any of their functions, must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions."* The Conservation Regulations 2010, (Regulation 41) contains the main offences for EPS animals, however the existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would an EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 further.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed signage would have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of its surrounding environment therefore fails to overcome the reason for refusal of application S6/2008/0150/FP contrary to PPG19, Policies D1 and D2 of the Hertfordshire of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE REFUSAL OF PERMISSION:

1. The scale of the proposed H-mounted sign would result in a feature visually dominant within the streetscene and does not adequately relate to the Aldi store by virtue of approximately 80m separation. The proposed sign would result in visual clutter along Comet Way resulting in a harmful impact on the

character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with PPG19 Outdoor Advertisement Control and Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and does not conform to the criteria outlined in the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

INFORMATIVES:

None

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS:

1:1250 Site Location Plan received and dated 7 April 2011 & 1944-20 Revision A received and dated 19 April 2011

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