

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT**

APPLICATION No: N6/2014/0695/AD

SITE ADDRESS: Stadium Service Station, Stanborough Road, Welwyn Garden City

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Retention of illuminated signage in relation to Automated Teller Machine

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The application site is a service station off the northern side of Stanborough Road. It is bounded to the west, north, and east by the rear gardens of residential properties. The south is bounded by Stanborough Road from which the site is accessed.

2. SITE DESIGNATION:

The site lies within the town of Welwyn Garden City and the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/2012/1299/AD - Installation of illuminated and non-illuminated signage (re-branding of existing Total signage) – Approved 04/09/2012

4. CONSULTATIONS:

Hertfordshire County Council Transport Programmes and Strategy – No objection

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS:

No representations have been received from the public.

6. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

- a) Impact on visual amenity and the Central Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area
- b) Highway Safety

7. ANALYSIS:

a) Policy D1 of the District Plan states that the council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality, including incorporating the design principles contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG). The SDG requires advertisements which require express consent to accord with a number of criteria whereby proposals should relate to the character, scale and design of the building on which they would be displayed, and should not detract from the character of the building and street scene.

Policy D2 of the District Plan requires new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Policy GBSP2 requires proposals in Welwyn Garden City to be compatible with the maintenance and enhancement of its character. The SPG contains additional criteria for proposals

within Conservation Areas which echo the abovementioned criteria and also states that the overriding aim is to preserve and enhance the uniqueness of each area, which is considered more important than competitive advertising or the promotion of corporate images. In addition to the previous criteria regarding the buildings on which advertisements would be displayed, attention should also be given to the design, size and location of the signage proposed, so that it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In this regard, the sensitive positioning of signs is considered vital to good design.

The site occupies a prominent position, with a primary frontage onto Stanborough Road and sits at the southern edge of a conservation area, with the area on the opposite side of the road lying outside of the conservation area. Whilst it lies in a conservation area, the development immediately adjacent to the west and east is comprised of modern properties, with older housing stock considered to be more vulnerable to impacts on their setting as heritage assets sited approximately 26 metres north of the northern site boundary, with their rear aspect orientated towards the site. The site is primarily visible and accessible from its frontage onto Stanborough Road. Consequently, whilst sited in a conservation area, the site is not considered to be sited in a particularly sensitive location with regard to its impact upon heritage assets.

The proposal seeks retrospective consent for the retention of illuminated signage on the ATM machine on the site. The ATM machine is located within a white painted steel bunker. The signage comprises a yellow band surrounding the ATM element, within the larger white steel bunker, and an element of red text within the band, above the machine. The site benefits from advertisement consent for a range of elements owing to its nature, most notably under the most recent application (N6/2012/1299/AD) for the rebranding of the canopy, shopfront, car wash and associated site signage. This includes yellow signage and much more prominent, larger, signage on these elements.

The ATM which houses the signage is sited adjacent to the south side of the service building/shop, parallel with its front building line. Its 2.3m scale and limited footprint, in the context of the approximate 3.8m eaves height and taller ridge height of the main service/shop building with its substantially larger footprint, mass and bulk, and against context of the other site structures including car wash and canopy, and the large site area, render it clearly as a subordinate addition to the main building/site with minimal bulk, mass and scale. In this context, the signage set within the larger white surrounding of the ATM/steel bunker is clearly subservient to this structure, which in turn is subordinate to those of the site and as such accords with the aims of the Council's Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG). In addition to this, given the presence of the aforementioned existing approved signage/advertisements throughout the site, including a larger yellow sign sited between the ATM and the roadway to the south, the proposal is considered to sufficiently high quality in design and respectful of the surrounding character and context as to satisfy the aims of policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan respectively, and in doing so maintains the significance of the conservation and satisfies the broadly consistent design aspirations of the NPPF.

b) The site already features advertisement consent for numerous elements of illuminated and non illuminated signage. Alongside the absence of an objection from Hertfordshire County Council Transport Programmes and Strategy, this leads to the conclusion that the proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

8. CONCLUSION:

The proposal is acceptable in terms of visual amenity and highway safety.

9. CONDITIONS:

1-5. C.10

6. C.13.1 Development shall be maintained in accordance with approved plans/details: 1:500 block plan & 1:1250 site location plan & drawings numbered: NW0295 & NW0187 & E009334 & NW0089 & drawing titled 'External Security Wall Construction' received and dated 03 April 2014.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and 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

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