

DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	N6/2005/771/AD
DESCRIPTION:	RETENTION OF INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA AND PROJECTING SIGNS
LOCATION:	31 STONEHILLS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

THE SITE

The application site comprises a three storey flat roofed red brick building that forms part of a parade of shops. The application site is located to the Centre part of Stonehills. There are existing parking spaces directly to the front of the property. On the opposite side of Stonehills there is a similar flat roofed red brick building, which is also occupied by shops.

THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed to replace the fascia at 31 Stonehills and erect a projecting sign to the western side of the shop. The sub fascia will be 13.1metres wide and will have a height of 350mm.It will have 4 black lozenge strips to be applied in dark pink vinyl to vary the effect. The centre of the sub fascia will contain a fascia sign. This will be 1.6m wide x 350mm high. The lettering depicting 'Evans' will be illuminated internally, but the rest of the sign, as agreed will be plain.

The projecting sign will have a depth of 500mm and a height of approximately 190mm.It will be internally illuminated.

PLANNING HISTORY

N6/1997/0783/AD - Erection of internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs – Granted 10/11/1997

N6/1994/0563/AD - Erection of internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs - Granted 15/12/1994

N6/1991/7049/AD - Internally illuminated fascia sign and internally illuminated projecting sign - Granted 14/10/1991

C6/1988/7014/AD - Illuminated fascia and projecting signs (Application received February, 1988. Treated as withdrawn.)

C6/1988/0176/FP - New shop front (Treated as withdrawn) -1 April 1998

N6/1980/7006/AD - Non-illuminated fascia sign and illuminated projecting sign -
Withdrawn 23/6/1980

N6/1980/0272/ - Alterations to shop front (Application received March, 1980) -
Granted 12/6/1980

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991- 2011:
NONE

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, 2005:

D1 QUALITY OF DESIGN

D2 CHARACTER AND CONTEXT

R22 DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

SUPPLEMENTARY DESIGN GUIDANCE

REPRESENTATIONS

Application advertised by means of neighbour notification and site notice. No objections were received.

Hertfordshire Highways – No response received.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group in a letter received on the 1 July 2005 – Request that this application be considered subject to the standards and criteria outlined in the current District Plan (Policy D3d, Policy D5) and that planning approval is conditional on compliance with the detailed access requirements.

Following a conversation with the BEAMS conservation architect, Russ Craig, verbally agrees to the amendments made to this proposal.

DISCUSSION

The main issue in the determination of this application is whether or not the proposal would be acceptable in terms of visual amenity and highway safety and whether it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and respect and relate to the character and context of the area as required by Policy D1 & D2 and Policy R22, and the supplementary guidance contained within the Adopted District Plan.

In Conservation Areas, where evidence of original shop front detail exists, for example, in a terrace or groups of buildings of similar design, proposals for new shop sub fascias will be expected to recreate the original design. In addition, new shop sub fascias in Conservation Areas will be expected to harmonise with the existing fascia depth, length and position.

The proposal is a retrospective planning application. Following correspondence with the agent prior to this application being made, the proposal is now an existing scheme.

The new sub fascia, although longer than what was previously there is, at 350mm in height, of an acceptable scale; it has been designed with this height so the decorative stonework remains, and it will mirror the height of the sub fascias of the surrounding shops - all the shops in the surrounding area have sub fascias with a depth of 350-450mm, which creates a sense of rhythm which is important in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre where the application property is located. Most shopping streets and parades exhibit an essential visual rhythm created by architectural characteristics within different buildings. It is desirable that shop fronts reinforce this rhythm rather than disrupt it and this can be achieved by designing shop fronts, which reflect the existing architectural features of the building. The depth of the proposed new sub fascia will not break up the uniform architectural line that forms part of this shopping parade. The drawings and subsequent site visits show that the proposed sub fascia contains 4 lozenge shapes to provide variation. They are very slight and do not harm or disrupt the rhythm of the street scene.

With regards to the proposed fascia sign, I consider this to be an improvement on what was originally there before. It will be flat facing (does not project out at all), and although longer, at 1620mm, it is far less bulky and more delicate in appearance. It respects the special qualities of the Conservation far more.

As far as illumination goes, it is only the lettering that is internally lit and this mirrors those of neighbouring shops along the parade, most notably No.29 and No.30.

A consistent feature of the street scene in Stonehills is the presence of projecting signs. Looking at the recent site history of the shops there seems to be an advent of projecting signs, so this proposal is not unreasonable. At 500mm deep x 95mm wide x 190mm high it mirrors most of the neighbouring projecting signs.

I consider the proposal to be an improvement on what was there previously, and is a development, which helps to preserve the special qualities of the existing street scene. The proposal therefore respects the visual amenity of the area.

With regard to highway safety I am satisfied that the signage by virtue of its size location, colour and method of illumination would not adversely affect highway safety.

CONCLUSION

The erection of internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs is considered not to have a harmful impact on the character of the Conservation Area and would not appear out of relation to the visual amenities of the locality generally or in terms of highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that planning application N6/2005/771/FP be granted

DRAWING NUMBERS

Location Plan – unnumbered

Proposed Sub Fascia, Fascia sign and Projecting sign – A3/121946 Rev 2

All received 22 June 2005