

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND GOVERNANCE**

**DELEGATED APPLICATION**

**Application No:** N6/2013/2092/AD  
**Location:** Howardsgate Welwyn Garden City AL8 6BB  
**Proposal:** Installation of fascia and projecting sign and window vinyls  
**Officer:** Mr S Dicocco

**Recommendation:** Refused

<b>Context</b>			
<b>Site and Application description</b>	<p>The site lies within Welwyn Garden City town centre, part of the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area. The site is designated within the Supplementary Design Guidance for Advertisements within Welwyn Garden City Town Centre as having a shopfront with a designed entablature.</p> <p>The proposal was for the erection of an illuminated fascia sign, a non-illuminated hanging sign, as well as a window vinyl.  A non-illuminated fascia sign of similar design to the illuminated fascia sign proposed, seemingly benefitted from Class 5 deemed consent, as well as the window vinyl proposed herein, have already been installed. The hanging sign is not yet installed on site.</p>		
<b>Constraints</b>	Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area		
<b>Relevant history</b>	<p>Application Number: N6/1997/0782/AD      Decision: Refused      Decision Date: 22 December 1997  Proposal: Erection of internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs</p> <p>Application Number: N6/1998/0561/AD      Decision: Granted      Decision Date: 20 July 1998  Proposal: Erection of internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs</p> <p>Application Number: N6/2006/0860/AD      Decision: Refused      Decision Date: 14 August 2006  Proposal: Installation of internally illuminated fascia and projecting sign</p> <p>Application Number: N6/2006/1132/AD      Decision: Granted      Decision Date: 27 September 2006  Proposal: Installation of internally illuminated fascia and projecting sign</p>		
<b>Consultations</b>			
<b>Neighbour representations</b>	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 0
<b>Publicity</b>	Site Notice		
<b>Summary of neighbour responses</b>	None		
<b>Consultees and responses</b>	No responses received		
<b>Relevant Policies</b>			

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
 D1  D2  Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG)

**Main Issues**

**Impact in regards to amenity** (includes aural and visual)

Advertisements within Conservation Areas must respect the character of the area and the building on which they are located. The design, materials, scale, detail and method of illumination must be carefully chosen to maintain the significance of the heritage asset. Consent should not be granted for advertisements which detract from architectural or historical significance of heritage assets. Furthermore, preferred advertisements upon designed entablature frontages in Welwyn Garden City town centre comprise individual lettering fixed to a white or opal painted fascia and fitted within the depth of the fascia.

Where a 'box' sign is proposed, the background should be white or opal and any coloured background should cover less than a third the width of the fascia. The reasoning behind the restriction of the coloured background of 'box' fascia signs stems from the desirability to preserve the continuity and appearance of the entablature.

The proposed sign would not accord with the Supplementary Design Guidance for box signs on designed entablatures in regards to the blue background covering the full width of the fascia. The sites fascia is not exceedingly deep, and as such, it is considered that the internally illuminated 'box' signs depth, between 0.05 and 0.1m, would likely exceed the depth of the fascia.

Although the sign would be contained within the shopfronts entablature, it is considered that the width of the coloured background of the 'box' sign, alongside its depth and its proximity to the designed entablature, would disrupt the continuity and appearance the entablature which is a feature of this part of the conservation area.

It is not considered that the proposed internally illuminated 'box' fascia signage would detract from any architectural or historical significance of the building in terms of the materials and method of illumination however the proposed sign would cause some harm to the significance of the heritage asset in terms of design, scale and detailing, in relation to the background colour and depth of the illuminated 'box' fascia sign and its coverage of the entablature.

Material considerations put forward by the applicant during negotiations were the fact that the background of the fascia could be painted blue, and fixed individual lettering advertisement fixed to the fascia without permission being required for the painting of the fascia, as has been recently installed at No.33 Stonehills. Whilst this is correct, as shown in the neighbouring premise, the individual lettering, and the lack of depth of the background colouring arguably preserves the designed entablature to a greater extent than the 'box' sign proposed.

Furthermore, the installation of a sign of the same design and detailing, seemingly without the requirement for express advertisement consent, puts forward a similar material consideration. Again, the signs depth is limited, thereby being materially different to those considerations within this application. Furthermore, this consideration would apply to any premises within the Welwyn Garden City town centre.

While there are illuminated box signs with coloured backgrounds filling the width of fascia's in the surrounding area, these examples are usually of sub-fascia's, where alternative considerations apply.

Accordingly, these above considerations are awarded limited cumulative weight.

	<p>While the proposed sign does comply with parts of policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, as expanded upon within the SDG, the proposed projecting box sign in this location is not considered appropriate. By virtue of the coloured background exceeding a third of the width of the fascia and the signage exceeding the depth of the fascia, the proposed signage would be of poor quality design which would harm the character and qualities of Welwyn Garden City town centre and would detract from the significance of shopfronts with designed entablature within Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area.</p> <p>The proposed projecting sign would be located at fascia height. Given its siting and dimensions, and its design, it would not appear unduly obtrusive when viewed from the street scene of Howardsgate. Its design would harmonise with the fascia depth and as such it satisfies the relevant criteria of the SDG.</p> <p>The proposed window vinyls and signage above the door, on the sub fascia, would be subservient in scale, design and prominence from that of the main shopfront. As such, no objection is made to them with regard to their impact on the visual amenities of the shopfront, host building and surrounding street scene of the conservation area. They would therefore accord with the above relevant aspects of the SDG and the aforementioned aims of policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan and the NPPF.</p>
<p><b>Impact in regards to public safety?</b> (e.g. safety of people; obscure or hinder traffic sign/ railway signal etc.; or hinder security or surveillance device or device measuring vehicle speed)</p>	<p>The proposal would involve illuminating the signage and a projecting sign. The site does not front a highway carrying vehicular traffic as it fronts a pedestrianised area. The site previously featured approved illuminated signage and a projecting sign. The projecting sign would not project higher than fascia level as is usual for such signs. The intensity and means of illumination could be controlled by way of planning conditions as a safety measure nonetheless for traffic further down the street on Howardsgate and Stonehills. Subject to such conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	
<p>The proposed window vinyl, the advertisement on the sub-fascia above the door, means of lighting and projecting sign would accord with the aims of the SDG and policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan and the NPPF.</p> <p>The proposed fascia signage, by virtue of its scale, design and detailing, particularly its extent of colour coverage and depth, would appear overly dominant and detract from the significance of and the continuity of and the appearance of the shopfront with its designed entablature. Accordingly, the proposed signage would fail to represent high quality design as it would not respect the visual amenities and thus character of the host shopfront, building and street scene within the Conservation Area, contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan, the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005 and paragraph 67 of the NPPF.</p>	

**Reasons for Refusal:**

1. The proposed fascia signage, by virtue of the scale, design and detailing, particularly its extent of colour coverage and depth, would appear overly prominent and detract from the significance of the continuity and appearance of shopfronts

with designed entablature. Accordingly, the proposed signage would fail to represent high quality design as it would not respect the visual amenities and thus character of the host shopfront, building and street scene within the Conservation Area, contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan, the Supplementary Design Guidance Statement of Council Policy 2005 and paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

#### REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

<b>Plan Number</b>	<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Received Date</b>
BS1461		Proposed and Existing Signage	10 October 2013
1:1250		Site Location Plan	10 October 2013

#### 1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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 viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

#### **Determined By:**

Mr M Robinson  
11 July 2017