

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	<u>N6/2007/272/FP</u>
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NOTATION:

The site is located within Welwyn Garden City as designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The site is located within a Conservation Area.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site is located within a retail frontage in Welwyn Garden City town centre fronting onto open space within the retail area of Howardsgate. The site comprises a jewellers shop at ground floor level with full length glass display windows to the front and side, with a side entrance door adjacent to stairs leading up to Osborn House above.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application proposes the installation of external perforated shutters to the shop frontage. The shutters would be finished in white. No details of the housing have been submitted with the application.

PLANNING HISTORY:

None.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None relevant.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

GBSP2 – Towns and Specified Settlements

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D7 – Safety by design

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS:

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None.

REPRESENTATIONS: None. Notification period expired 2 April 2007.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1) Potential impact on the character of the site and surrounding Conservation Area;**

- 2) **Potential impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties;**
- 3) **Other material planning considerations.**

1) Policy D1 requires all new development to be of a high quality of design incorporating the design principles of the plan & SPG. Policy D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan requires any development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area. In this instance it is important to consider the setting within the Conservation Area.

Section 7 of the design SPG specifies that preference in relation to the installation of security shutters in such a sensitive location will be given to those least visually intrusive and lists in order of preference the shutters that are preferred. The guidance indicates the need to avoid plain metal shutters within such locations. Security shutters are required to be an integral part of the design and in Conservation Areas the installation of external security roller shutters will only be granted permission in exceptional circumstances. In this particular case the shop is in a high risk area where jewellery is particularly attractive to thieves and the applicant states that there is an issue of security given they have experienced a number of attacks where the windows have been broken even with internal shutters in place, however no details from insurers has been submitted.

The proposed security shutter would be sited on the exterior of the small shop front and would replace the internal shutters currently in use at the shop. The roller shutters would be perforated and would allow vision through. This is considered to be one of the least visually intrusive of roller shutters as a security measure as stated in the supplementary design guidance and would not prevent the passing surveillance of the shops interior and is not therefore contrary to the design guidance and in turn policy D1.

With regards to the housing for the shutter, it is important that this forms an integral part of the design of the shop front and does not appear as a 'bolted-on' addition. Whilst it would not hide any architectural features, the proposal should respect the shop front fascia and not stand proud of it, and as such should be fully incorporated into the fascia and the runners incorporated into the pilasters. Details of the housing have not been incorporated with the submission and further details in relation to the housing details would therefore be required in addition to a larger scaled plan. The existing fascia above the sign is unsightly and officers consider that a suitable housing can be achieved via condition.

2) The application has been prompted due to issues surrounding security of the shop given its central location within the town centre and high risk type of shop. The neighbouring property of the Chinese Acupuncture & Herbal Centre is a mirror image of the application site and a clothing shop adjoins the other side of the site. The installation of shutters would not affect these retail properties nor would have an impact upon the access to Osborn House directly adjacent to the site.

3) No further issues.

CONCLUSION:

Perforated lath shutters are considered to be the least visually intrusive design of external shutters and are more appropriate within a Conservation Area and as such complies with the provisions of policy D1 and the supplementary design guidance. The installation of these shutters on the retail frontage of this shop would not be

detrimental upon the character of the street nor would impact upon the neighbouring retail uses.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1) C.2.1

REASON: In order to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act (As amended).

2) The shop shall be illuminated during the hours of darkness unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of policy D1 and Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

3) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a plan at a scale of not less than 1:25 showing the design of the perforated lath shutter and the design of the housing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Subsequently the proposal shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: The application contains insufficient detail of the housing to ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality in accordance with policy D1 and Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 GBSP2, D1, D2 & D7), in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which 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).

INFORMATIVES:

None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Plan & Plan view of shutter layout and date stamped 15 February 2007.

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