

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>N6/2007/480/AD</b>
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**NOTATION:** The site lies within the settlement of Welwyn Garden City, the Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area and the Welwyn Garden City Primary Retail Core as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:** The site is located to the West of Stonehills in the centre of Welwyn Garden City. The site measures approximately 40 metres deep and 26 metres wide and contains a large three-storey retail unit.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:** The application outlines the proposal to install illuminated lettering on the existing fascias of the property. These letters would be 0.4 metres high and would have an overall width of 4.4 metres. One set of lettering would be installed at the North East corner of the site and the other set would be installed at the West end of the North elevation of the building.

The application also outlines the proposal to install high-level illuminated lettering at the West elevation of the building, between the first floor and second floor windows. The lettering would measure 0.6 metres high and would have an overall width of 6 metres.

The application originally proposed the erection of a banner sign, however this proposal has been removed from this application.

**PLANNING HISTORY:** Application N6/1990/7042/FP approved permission for the erection of non-illuminated fascia and wall signs, and illuminated projecting box sign.

Application N6/1990/0595/FP approved permission for alterations to the elevations.

**SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011: None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development

GBSP2 - Towns and specified settlements

R22 – Development in Conservation Areas

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

**CONSULTATIONS:** Hertfordshire Highways have outlined support for the application subject to the attachment of the following conditions:

Conditions 1. The intensity of illumination shall be controlled at a level that is within the limit recommended by the Association of Public Lighting Engineering in the publication "Brightness of illuminated Advertisements" A.P.L.E. Technical Report No 5.

Reason: So that drivers of vehicles along the adjacent public highway are not dazzled or distracted, leading to interference to the free and safe flow of traffic along the highway.

**TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:** None

**REPRESENTATIONS:** The Welwyn Hatfield Access Group requested that building regulations are considered. Period expired 23/04/07.

**DISCUSSION: The main issues are:**

- 1. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding Conservation Area.**
- 2. The impact on the amenity of residents and highway safety.**
- 3. Other Material Planning Considerations**

- 1) The proposed installations would be highly visible from many places within the surrounding area and therefore it is considered highly likely that they would have an impact on the character and appearance of the building and the Conservation Area.

The proposed fascia signage is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the previous signage at the site and would be in-keeping with various other advertising installations within the surrounding area. The proposed installations would reflect the height of the existing fascias and would not have an appearance that would detract from the character, visual or architectural interests of the existing building.

The proposed high-level lettering at the West elevation would be well positioned in relation to the windows on the side of the building and would fill a partially vacant area of the building, thereby creating additional interest in the West elevation of the building.

The only premises of comparable size within the immediate vicinity is John Lewis on the opposite side of Wigmore's North. It is considered that the proposed signage is of identical style to the signage that is featured at John Lewis and is of very similar size. It is therefore considered that the proposed installations would compliment the character of the surrounding area. The principle of the installations is considered to be acceptable on the basis of the John Lewis argument, as outlined above, and on the grounds that the signage would replace similar signs that were located on the building during the sites previous occupation.

The application originally proposed the installation of a banner sign which was considered to be unacceptable. This element has been removed from the proposal, by condition and in accordance with email confirmation from the applicant.

- 2) Hertfordshire Highways have outlined an opinion that the proposal would not be detrimental to the safety of surrounding highway users, provided that the level of illumination does not exceed recognised standards. It is possible to condition the brightness of the illumination, therefore it is considered that the proposal would not pose an additional danger to highway safety.

Due to the controls to be placed on the brightness of the illumination, the presence of other adverts in the surrounding area and the distance from the application site to any surrounding residencies, it is considered that the proposed installations would not result in an additional nuisance to neighbouring properties. It is therefore considered that it would be unreasonable to refuse the application on those grounds.

**CONCLUSION:** The proposed signage, by virtue of its scale, appearance and positioning would not detract from the character or appearance of the site or the surrounding Conservation Area to an extent that would justify the refusal of the application on those grounds. The proposed development would have a character and appearance that is in-keeping with the appearance of the existing building and would well reflect similar signage on the surrounding buildings. Subject to controls placed on the level of illumination, it is considered that the installations would not result in an additional danger to highway safety and would not detrimentally affect the amenity of any nearby residents.

### **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

#### **CONDITIONS:**

- 1) C.2.1
- 2) The intensity of illumination shall be controlled at a level that is within the limit recommended by the Association of Public Lighting Engineering in the publication "Brightness of illuminated Advertisements" A.P.L.E. Technical Report No 5, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: So that drivers of vehicles along the adjacent public highway are not dazzled or distracted, leading to interference to the free and safe flow of traffic along the highway.

- 3) The Advertising Consent hereby approved shall only relate to the signage marked B and C on plan TRC/1058-05. The proposed banner sign (marked Sign A on plan TRC/1058-05) shall not be implemented in accordance with the applicant's email dated 10 May 2007 timed at 10:01.

Reason: To clarify the terms of the planning permission and because the proposed sign would be visually over dominant and out of keeping with the character of the area, contrary to policies D1, D2 and R22 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

#### **SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE APPROVAL OF PERMISSION:**

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 Policies SD1, GBSP2, R22, D1 and D2), 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:** TCR/1058-05 & Site Plan.

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