

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	N6/2007/1577/FP
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NOTATION:

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site is terraced commercial property located on the corner of Howardsgate and Stonehills. It is a prominent building at the heart of the Conservation Area and is surrounded by a number of other commercial properties.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application proposes the installation of four non-illuminated fascia signs and two internally illuminated projecting signs. The four fascia signs would have a white background with standard individual, 200mm blue lettering. Two signs would face Howardsgate and two Stonehills. The two projecting signs would replace the existing, however along Howardsgate the projecting sign would be relocated from the east to the west side of the building.

PLANNING HISTORY:

N6/2006/1577/AD – Installation of 4 No. internally illuminated fascia signs and 2 No. internally illuminated projecting signs – The application was recommended for a split decision, approving the only the 2No. internally illuminated projected signs. The 4No. internally illuminated fascia signs were REFUSED as by virtue of its prominent location, scale and design, the four internally illuminated fascia signs will be visually intrusive and have an adverse impact on the character and visual amenity of the building and the Conservation area.

N6/2004/1243/AD – Installation of non-illuminated lettering to elevations facing Howardsgate and Stonehills and erection of two banners at first floor level and installation of non-illuminated ATM surround – The application was recommended for a split decision, approving only the non-illuminated lettering. The rest of the application was refused as the two proposed banner signs would be visually intrusive, breaking up the visual rhythm of the street scene and would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
XX

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

D1 - Quality of design
D2 - Character and context
R22 - Development in Conservation Area

CONSULTATIONS

BEAMS –

- Present signs over the central door seems appropriate.
- There seems no good reason to change the location to be above the windows.
- The relocation of the projecting sign causes no offence.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

None

REPRESENTATIONS

This application was advertised by means of neighbour notification letters on 2nd April 2007 and site notice on 1st May 2007.

The representation period ended on 23rd April 2007 and 22nd May 2007 respectively. No representations were received.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1) The impact of the signage on the visual amenity of the area, highway safety and whether there are any other material considerations.

1) Under the provisions of section 220 of the 1990 Act and Regulation 4 of the Advertisement Regulations, adverts are subject to control only in the interests of visual amenity and, where applicable, public safety. However the guidance given in the Supplementary Design Guidance is considered to be a material factor.

This application is a resubmission of planning application N6/2007/1577/AD that was part approval and part refusal. Policy has not changed since the previous application and it is considered that the 2No. internally illuminated projecting signs that were previously approved shall be approved again subject to the same conditions. It is the four fascia signs that will be considered in this application. They were previously refused for the reason stated in the 'PLANNING HISTORY' and to gain approval they would need to overcome the previous reason for refusal.

There were three key issues with the previous fascia signs. The first was that they were internally illuminated, the second was the white backing board and the third was their siting above the windows. The proposed signs are now non-illuminated fascia signs, which overcome the first reason for refusal, however there are no other alterations to the scheme. There would still be two fascia signs replacing one on both elevations and as such they would no longer be centred and they would still protrude directly from the banding. The existing signage is individual letters that have been applied to the stonework banding and respect the architectural character of this prominent building. It is considered that the revised signs would therefore not respect the architectural design of the building and still have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

BEAMS (Conservation Officers) have offered comments that support the views above and the four fascia signs will therefore be recommended for refusal.

CONCLUSION:

It is considered that the 2No. internally illuminated projecting signs have not been altered in design or siting since their approval as part of planning application N6/2006/1577/AD and therefore shall still be recommended for approval. The 4No. non-illuminated fascia signs have not altered sufficiently to overcome the previous reason for refusal and it is considered that they would still have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION: SPLIT DECISION

APPROVAL

The signs GRANTED permission are the '2 LLOYDS TSB INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED PROJECTING SIGNS' below the banding as shown on Drawings 50215800-1 and 50215800-2, subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS:

1. STANDARD ADVERTISEMENT CONDITIONS

REASON

The reason for conditions 1-3 is to comply with the Control of Advertisement Regulations 1992.

2. NON STANDARD CONDITION

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 highway are not dazzled or distracted, leading to interference to the free and safe flow of traffic along the highway.

3. NON STANDARD CONDITION

All projecting light fittings must be at a height of, or greater than 2.3 m vertically above the footpath and no less than 500 mm horizontally from the edge of the carriageway.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian/highway safety and convenience.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 D1, D2, R22 and Supplementary Design Guidance, 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.

REFUSAL

The signs REFUSED permission are the '4No. INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGNS' on the banding as shown in drawings 50215800-1 and 50215800-2, for the following reason:

REASON FOR REFUSAL

1. By virtue of its prominent location, scale and design, the four non-illuminated fascia signs will be visually intrusive and have an adverse impact on the character and visual amenity of the building and the Conservation area. The proposed signs are therefore contrary to D1, D2, and R22 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the Supplementary Design Guidance, Feb 2005.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 1:1250 & 50215800-1 & 50215800-2 RECEIVED 30 MAR 07

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