

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

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2017/0456/ADV
Location: Land at Bessemer Road Welwyn Garden City AL7 1HU
Proposal: Erection of three internally illuminated freestanding forecourt signs
 5m in height and 1.8m in width
Officer: Ms L Hale

Recommendation: Refused

6/2017/0456/ADV

Context	
Site and Application description	<p>The application site is located on the north west side of the junction of Bessemer Road and Bridge Road, Welwyn Garden City. The site is located to the east of Welwyn town centre.</p> <p>This application follows permission for the <i>'Erection of 2no industrial/distribution buildings comprising a mix of commercial uses: Unit 3 (sui generis builders merchant for the display, sale, storage of building, timber and plumbing supplies, plant and tool hire including outside display and storage); Unit 4 (Class A1 bulky goods retail warehouse) and Units 5 to 8 (Class B1(c), B2 and B8 with trade counters and ancillary showrooms, and sui generis tile merchants) including access and servicing arrangements, car parking, landscaping and associated works.'</i> reference 6/2015/1957/MAJ. The units are currently under construction.</p> <p>The application seeks advert consent for the erection of three internally illuminated freestanding forecourt signs 5m in height and 1.8m in width and thickness of approximately 0.15m. Two of the forecourts would be located on the south east of the site on the junction of Bridge Road and Bessemer Road and a on the north east of the site along Bessemer Road. The forecourts would be internally static illuminated with a maximum luminance level of 475 cd/m and would be made of aluminium carcass with a printed blue and silver PVC face and the illuminated panels will be of white background with the tenant's logo's affixed.</p>
Constraints	<p>EMPL - EA1 (Welwyn Garden City Industrial Area)</p> <p>HZ - Hazardous Zones (GasHolder200m)</p> <p>Wards - Handside</p> <p>Wards - Peartree</p>
Relevant history	<p>6/2017/0501/ADV- Installation of 1x part illuminated fascia sign – Granted 25/04/2017</p> <p>6/2017/0010/ADV - Installation of 3 part illuminated Wickes building signs, 1 welcome sign, 1 directional post sign, 1 set of 2 poster frames and 6 sets of product letter – Granted 21/02/2017</p>

	<p>N6/2015/1298/MA: Erection of building for either a flexible B2 or B8 use or as a vehicle accident and repair building with ancillary office accommodation car parking, service and storage yard, external works and landscaping. Approved 06/08/2015.</p> <p>N6/2014/2385/MA: Change of use from Class B8 and erection of new building for use as a vehicle accident and repair centre and ancillary works on land west of the site (adjacent to the railway line). Granted</p> <p>N6/2014/1932/EI: Proposed vehicle accident repair centre, ancillary office space, secure service yard, car parking and external car storage area on land west of the site (adjacent to the railway line) . EIA(N) 22/09/2014</p> <p>N6/2014/2384/MA: Erection of building for either a flexible B1(c), B2 or B8 use or as a mixed use; manufacturing, research and development facility with ancillary office accommodation, storage, car parking, service yard and access on land immediately west of the site. Granted.</p>		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support:	Object:	Other:
Publicity	Site Notice Display Date: 18 April 2017 Site Notice Expiry Date: 9 May 2017		
Summary of neighbour responses	None received		
Consultees and responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comments have been received from Councillors - Environmental Health – No objections - Hertfordshire Transport Programmes & Strategy – No objection subject to conditions 		
Relevant Policies			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NPPF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supplementary Design Guidance			
Main Issues			
Impact in regards to amenity (includes aural and visual)	<p>Paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that: “Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to detailed assessment by the local planning authority. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.”</p> <p>The relevant District Plan policies include Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan which require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality, and that new development respects and relates to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. The Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 states that all advertisements requiring express consent must accord with the following criteria: (1) proposals should be well-designed and should relate to the character, scale and design of the building on which they are displayed; (2) the size and position of the signs should respect the architectural features of the buildings on which they are displayed; (3) proposals should not create visual clutter; (4) illumination will only be permitted where it would not be visually intrusive and is provided by discreet means.</p>		

	<p>The proposal consists of three freestanding signs which would have a width of 1.8 metres and height of 5 metres and thickness of approximately 0.15 metres. Two forecourts would be located on the south west of the site, on the junction of Bessemer Road and Bridge Road and the individual forecourt to the north east of the site.</p> <p>Two of the proposed signs would be positioned at the junction of Bessemer Road and Bridge Road, which is a highly prominent location. It is considered that the bulk and mass of the proposed forecourts signs would result in an unduly dominant addition that would be visible from an array of views as a result of the location on the crossroad. An additional forecourt sign is proposed along Bessemer Road; it is considered that as a result of the size and location of the structure, this sign would be unduly prominent when travelling along this road. The resultant amount of forecourt signage proposed would create visual clutter to the detriment of the character of the streetscene and would introduce discordance and incongruous elements.</p> <p>Whilst it is noted that the proposed forecourt signage would be advertising the units within Bessemer Park, it is considered that signage granted to these units would be readily visible from Bridge Road and Bessemer Road given the prominent corner siting of the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal of three forecourt signage structures of such scale and massing would be excessive and unnecessary. Notwithstanding the commercial character of the area, rather than an incidental feature to the signage within the buildings, the forecourts would result in visual clutter unacceptable harm.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is noted that the adjacent site located on the north east of the junction between Bessemer Road and Bridge Road, benefits from a freestanding totem. Whilst it is noted that the proposed forecourt structures would be of similar height, the timber totem pole is far more discrete in bulk and massing, in comparison with the proposed two forecourt signage structures which would sit adjacent.</p> <p>The sign would be internally illuminated. The proposed luminance level would be 400cd/m and is not considered to result in a brightness that would be detrimental to the street scene.</p> <p>The proposed signage, by virtue of its siting, scale and amount would form incongruous and dominant additions that would fail to maintain the established character and appearance of the area and would, therefore, be to the detriment of the visual amenity of their surrounding area. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to NPPF and District Plan Policies D1 and D2, and the Supplementary Design Guidance.</p>
<p>Impact in regards to public safety? (e.g. safety of people; obscure or hinder traffic sign/ railway signal etc.; or hinder security or surveillance device or device measuring vehicle</p>	<p>The comments received from Hertfordshire County Council Highway Authority raised no objection to the proposal.</p> <p>The location of the signage is unlikely to impact upon highway visibility, no part of the signage overhangs the highway or internal road/walkways. As the signs are situated on private land and are not of a design that could confuse road users, the signs are acceptable in highways terms.</p> <p>It is viewed as unlikely that any aspect of the sign will impact upon highway capacity or safety, subject to the condition above I present no objections.</p>

speed)	
Conclusion	
<p>In conclusion, it is considered that the scale, bulk, amount and siting of the proposed signage, would result in an incongruous and unduly prominent additions which would fail to maintain the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area. Furthermore, when considered alongside the extent of proposed signage on the buildings, the proposal would result in an excessive number of signs within this site which would result in visual clutter to the detriment of the character of the streetscene. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with the NPPF and District Plan D1, and D2 and Supplementary Design Guidance.</p> <p>With regard to public safety, the proposed advertisement is unlikely to result in any adverse impact on highway safety given its location away from the main road.</p>	

Reasons for Refusal:

1. The advertisement, by virtue of its siting, scale and bulk would constitute an incongruous and dominant addition which would fail to maintain the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. When taken into consideration with the proposed signage on the buildings, the resultant site would represent an excessive number of signs that would create visual clutter to the detriment of the visual amenity of the streetscene. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the adopted Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 and the advice contained in paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

REFUSED DRAWING NUMBERS

2.

Plan Number	Revision Number	Details	Received Date
Drawing 1		Utility Survey	16 March 2017
Drawing 2		Site Location Plan	16 March 2017
Drawing 3		Illustration	16 March 2017
Drawing 3		Illustration	16 March 2017
Cont			

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:

Ms F Nwanze
11 May 2017