

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2018  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND  
GOVERNANCE)

6/2018/0893/ADV

BESSEMER ROAD WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL7 1HU

INSTALLATION OF 1 X NON-ILLUMINATED AND 2 X EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED  
FASCIA SIGNS

APPLICANT: Mr K SZRAMEK

(Peartree)

**1 Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site is situated on the north east side of the junction of Bessemer Road and Bridge Road in Welwyn Garden City. The site is located to the east of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre and forms part of the Employment Area.
- 1.2 The site comprises of a mix of commercial units with a range of uses including a builders merchants and tile merchants (sui generis), Classes B1(c), B2 and B8 units with trade counters and ancillary showrooms and Class A1 a bulky goods retail warehouse.
- 1.3 The application site comprises of unit 5, which is to be occupied by Dulux Decorator Centre. The unit, under planning permission 6/2015/1957/MAJ originally restricted its use to a tile merchant under a sui generis use. A non-material amendment of reference 6/2015/1957/NMA was sought to secure the unit for a flexible use comprising of sui generis, B1, B2 and B8.

**2 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks advertisement consent for one non-illuminated and two externally illuminated fascia signs.
- 2.2 Advert 1 will be located on the front elevation of the unit facing Bessemer Road to form the main elevation sign 'Dulux Decorator Centre'. The sign will be positioned 4 metres above ground level with a projection of 0.45. The sign will measure 3.50 metres in height by 4.86 metres in width by 0.20 metres in depth. The materials proposed are aluminium, pvc skin in dark blue on silver and it is to be externally illuminated with levels of 120 cd/m with an overhead LED troughlight.
- 2.3 Advert 2 will be located on the front elevation forming a secondary sign 'Welwyn Garden City'. The sign indicating the location forms part of the logo of the brand. The sign will be positioned 4 metres above ground level, measuring 1.08 metres high by 2.88 metres wide by 0.03 metres in depth. The materials proposed are aluminium pvc vinyl in dark blue on silver. The sign will not be illuminated.

- 2.4 Advert 3 will be located on the side elevation of the units and will sit below the existing adverts for the units within the building it comprises. The sign will read 'Dulux Decorator Centre' and will be positioned 3.85 metres above ground level. The sign will measure 1.5 metres in height by 6.76 metres wide with a depth of 0.06 metres. The materials proposed are aluminium pvc skin in dark blue on silver and it is to be externally illuminated with illuminated levels of 120 cd/m.

### **3 Reason for Committee Consideration**

- 3.1 This application is presented to the Development Management Committee because Councillor Cowan has submitted an objection and called the application to Committee for a decision.

### **4 Relevant Planning History**

- 4.1 Application Number: 6/2017/2204/ADV  
Decision: Refused  
Decision Date: 14 December 2017  
Proposal: Installation of 3 x internally illuminated freestanding forecourt signs measuring 3m in height and 1.8m in width
- 4.2 Application Number: 6/2017/1370/ADV  
Decision: Granted  
Decision Date: 06 September 2017  
Proposal: Installation of 4 x non-illuminated vinyl signs
- 4.3 Application Number: 6/2017/0456/ADV  
Decision: Refused  
Decision Date: 12 May 2017  
Proposal: Erection of three internally illuminated freestanding forecourt signs 5m in height and 1.8m in width
- 4.4 Application Number: 6/2017/0501/ADV  
Decision: Granted  
Decision Date: 25 April 2017  
Proposal: Installation of 1x part illuminated fascia sign
- 4.5 Application Number: 6/2017/0185/ADV  
Decision: Granted  
Decision Date: 28 March 2017  
Proposal: Installation of 4 fascia signs: 1x internally illuminated 3x non-illuminated on warehouse building.
- 4.6 Application Number: 6/2017/0186/ADV  
Decision: Granted  
Decision Date: 28 March 2017  
Proposal: Installation of 5 fascia signs. 2x internally illuminated 3x non-illuminated
- 4.7 Application Number: 6/2017/0010/ADV  
Decision: Granted  
Decision Date: 21 February 2017  
Proposal: 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.
- 4.8 Application Number: 6/2015/1957/MAJ

Decision: Granted

Decision Date: 19 February 2016

Proposal: 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

## **5 Relevant Planning Policy**

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)
- 5.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (Local Plan)
- 5.3 Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016 (Emerging Local Plan)
- 5.4 Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (SDG)

## **6 Site Designation**

- 6.1 The site lies within the specified settlement of Welwyn Garden City as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and falls within an Employment Area.

## **7 Representations Received**

- 7.1 The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification letters and a site notice. One representation has been received in support of the application. This comment is summarised below:
  - Support a national company such as Dulux Trade Centre investing in Welwyn Garden City and creating employment
  - The signage is in keeping with that expected on Trade Park and in line with other approved signs on the building

## **8 Consultations Received**

- 8.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways – No objection

## **9 Reason for Committee Consideration**

- 9.1 Councillor Cowan has objected, and called-in the application, with the following:

*'I object to the proposed signs. This block already has an excess of signage, in both size and numeric terms. Much of it is probably unauthorised - can you check, and inform Enforcement accordingly? The proposed sign saying 'Welwyn Garden City' is particularly fatuous and unnecessary. The companies should be made to rationalise and merge their signage, not keep adding to it, presumably on the grounds of precedent.'*

## **10 Analysis**

- 10.1 The assessment of advert applications is limited to the consideration of the quality of the design, the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

and highway safety. The main planning policies which can to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- 1. Quality of the design and impact on the character and appearance of the area (Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan 2005, Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, Policies SADM6 and SP9 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012)**
- 2. Highway safety and capacity (the National Planning Policy Framework 2012)**

**1. Quality of the design and impact on the character and appearance of the area**

- 10.2 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.”
- 10.3 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. Emerging Local Plan Policies SADM6 further requires a high standard of design to ensure proposals do not detrimentally affect the character and appearance of an area.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 The proposal consists of three signs; two positioned on the front elevation of the unit facing towards Bessemer Road and the additional located on the side elevation of the main building.
- 10.6 The signs on the front elevation consist of a large sign ‘Advert 1’ which reads ‘Dulux Decorator Centre’ and a secondary sign ‘Advert 2’ which reads ‘Welwyn Garden City’. This main sign is to advertise the proposed business of the unit and replaces an existing sign ‘Tile Giant’. The unit of which the sign will be located sits within a large commercial building which consists of a number of units, including Wickes, Benchmarx and City Plumbing.
- 10.7 The size, design and appearance of the proposed sign would respect and relate to the application building and as a result of its location within a large commercial site with multiple units and adverts, it is not considered that the scale, siting or appearance would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the site or surrounding area.

- 10.8 The secondary sign on the front elevation is located to the right-hand side of the main sign and reads 'Welwyn Garden City'. The unit currently benefits from two secondary signs to the left-hand side. The justification provided by the applicant indicates that a secondary location sign forms part of the brand's logo.
- 10.9 Furthermore, with regard to a secondary sign on the front elevation, there are units within the building which have been granted consent for secondary signs of similar siting and scale. As a result, it is considered that the principle of a secondary sign has been established and is consistent with existing signage on the building.
- 10.10 The third sign is proposed on the side elevation of the building and would read 'Dulux Decorator Centre'. The additional sign would be positioned below the existing signs advertising Benchmarx and City Plumbing. The scale and appearance would relate and respect the building and would be in keeping with the existing signage on this elevation.
- 11 Whilst it is noted that Cllr Cowan raises objection the number of signs apparent on the building, the application site currently benefits from advertisement of the current business 'Tile Giant' and as this is a separate unit, the consent relates to a new advert for a new business 'Dulux Decorator Centre'. The principle of signage within the locations proposed and of such size has been established on building and the site, the proposal to replace existing signs on the front elevation and to add an additional sign on the side elevation, is not considered to result in visual harm or unreasonable clutter, given the commercial character of the site and this area.
- 11.1 The proposed signage, by virtue of its scale, siting, design and appearance would respect and relate to the character and appearance of the application building and site. The principle of signage of such scale and location is well-established as a result of the consent given to the additional units within the building. As a result, the proposed signage is in keeping with the character and appearance of the site and it is not considered to result in a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area. The proposed development would therefore comply with the District Plan Policies D1 and D2, Emerging Local Plan Policy SADM6 and the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

## **2. Highway safety and capacity**

- 11.2 The proposed signage is located on the application building within the curtilage of the site and would not interfere with highway land. In addition, the location would be unlikely to impact upon highway visibility or the interaction between the site's internal movements and access for vehicles, therefore not representing a detrimental impact to public safety or highway safety.
- 11.3 With regard to illumination, Advert 1 and Advert 2 would be externally illuminated. As a result of the illuminated levels, the nature of the lighting would not be visually intrusive and does not present risk to highway safety.
- 11.4 It is considered that the proposal will be unlikely to have a material impact to highway capacity and would not adversely affect local highway safety.

## **12 Conclusion**

- 12.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in regard to scale, siting, design and appearance which would respect and relate to the host building. The principle of signage of this location and scale has been established by the existing signage within its place on the front elevation and the existing signs for the additional units

within the building. Furthermore the proposed adverts would not adversely affect local highway safety or adversely affect visual amenity. The proposed development would comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the Supplementary Planning Guidance 2005, Policies SP9 and SADM6 of the Emerging Local Plan 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

## **10. Recommendation**

10.1 It is recommended that planning permission be approved subject to the following condition:

1. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

2. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

3. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

4. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

5. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any road traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, or so as otherwise to render hazardous the use of any highway, railway, waterway or aerodrome (civil or military).

REASON: To comply with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

6. This consent does not authorise any flashing, intermittent or recurring form of illumination.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

#### DRAWING NUMBERS

7. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

| <b>Plan Number</b> | <b>Revision Number</b> | <b>Details</b>                               | <b>Received Date</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| #00310343          |                        | Location Plan                                | 5 April 2018         |
| 1                  |                        | Adv 1 and 2 - Existing & Proposed Elevations | 5 April 2018         |
| 2                  |                        | Adv 3 - Existing & Proposed Elevations       | 5 April 2018         |

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

#### 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).

Lucy Hale (Development Management)

Date: 01/06/2018

Date of Expiry: 22/06/2018



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|  <p><b>WELWYN<br/>HATFIELD</b></p> <p>Council Offices, The Campus<br/>Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 5AE</p> | Title: Bessemer Road Welwyn Garden City |  | Scale: DNS         |
|   | Project: DMC Committee                  |  | Date: 2018         |
|   | Drawing Number: 6/2018/0893/ADV         |  | Drawn: Ida Moesner |
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