Expiry 12/04/07

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0043/07 **Recommendation - Permit**

Site: **136 Upper Shoreham Road Shoreham-by-Sea West Sussex BN43 6TD**

Proposal: **Illuminated signage (retrospective) (Woods of Sussex former BP filling Station)**

The Application

The application site is located on the northern side of Upper Shoreham Road. It is a large site which was until recently used as a filling station operated by BP. It has recently been granted planning permission for a change of use to retail car sales (SU/33/06) and now operates as "Woods of Sussex" with approximately 120 used cars for sale on site.

The site has a road frontage approximately 60 metres long facing Upper Shoreham Road. At the eastern end of the site there is a brick rectangular building with a flat roof currently used as the office, with a canopy 4 metres high covering the central part of the site. There is a second brick building at the rear of the site behind the canopy used for a car wash. The site has two formed accesses onto the road, one at each end of the site.

The applicant seeks retrospective permission for a number of internally illuminated advertising signs which have already been established on the site in conjunction with the activity. These are as follows:

- A two sided totem sign 4.2m high x 1.6m wide (6.72m² each side) located at the road frontage perpendicular to the highway;
- A sign 16.15m long x 0.775m high (12.52m²) located on the south facing elevation of the canopy;
- A sign 9m long x 0.805m high (6.44m²) located on the west facing elevation of the canopy; and
- A sign 4.205m long x 0.775m high (3.26m²) located on the east facing elevation of the canopy.

A fourth internally illuminated sign (on the south facing elevation of the car wash building) has been removed from the application. The sign will remain on site as a non-illuminated sign with deemed consent.

The illuminated signs are all back lit from low voltage light boxes with a maximum level of illumination of 100 candelas per square metre. The applicant proposes that the signs are permanently illuminated to assist in providing light for CCTV cameras and security personnel to monitor the site. All of the signage is dark blue with brighter blue text in an easy to read format.

Consent for three non-illuminated signs on the main office building was requested in the original application. At the site visit it was noted that two of the "non-illuminated" signs on the main building were lit by fixed external spotlights. The applicant has agreed remove this lighting. These signs all now are considered to have deemed consent under Class 5 and have been removed from the application.

On the fence on the western boundary, the applicant originally proposed another non-illuminated sign. This sign has been deleted from the application and will be removed from site. Small signs denoting customer parking spaces also attached to this fence are considered to have deemed consent under Class 2A.

The application site is located on a busy 'C' Classified Road just to the west of the Holmbush Roundabout and the surrounding sites are all residential in nature.

Consultations and Representations

Consultees

West Sussex County Council Highways and Transport Services have no objection to the proposal, noting that the maximum illuminance level of the signage is well within the recommended brightness levels and the totem sign is also situated far enough from the edge of the public highway so as not to have an impact upon visibility for emerging vehicles

The Adur District Council Environmental Health Officer has no objection to the proposal.

Third Parties

Two representations objecting to the proposal have been received from nearby residents, No. 141 (opposite the site) and No. 138 (to the rear of the site). The issues raised by these residents are as follows:

- The light emitted from the site is excessive and, as they are on all night, it results in a constant nuisance throughout the night into the windows of nearby properties.
- While is it is recognised that permanent illumination is necessary for security surveillance, the illumination of the blue advertising signs and an enclosed area at the rear appears to be unnecessary.
- The down lighting from the main canopy is reflected off the many cars parked beneath, considerably amplifying the lighting effect.
- While the application refers to non-illuminated signage, it appears that all the signage is illuminated.
- There are enough illuminated and non-illuminated signs and removable flags erected on site and one must remember that this site is in the middle of a residential area and not a light industrial estate.
- Due to the loss of trees when the site was changed from a filling station to car sales, adjoining properties suffer from over-illumination.

- The signs give the site the look of a night club or Blackpool Illuminations.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan: AG1, AB17
West Sussex Structure Plan: DEV1
Planning Policy Guidance PPG19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control"

Planning Assessment

Policies

While it is recognised that a number of types of advertisement can be displayed without the express consent of the planning authority, Policy AB17 of the Adur District Local Plan states that the District Planning Authority will only grant express consent for advertisements which (a) respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and (b) do not create a danger or hazard to public safety. Policy DEV1 of West Sussex Structure Plan requires that development should be of high quality taking into account the need to integrate with and minimise conflicts between land-uses and activities.

Visual Amenity

The use of the site has long been established as commercial premises despite its location in close proximity to residential dwellings and, in principle, there is no objection to commercial signage on this site. The previous occupiers of the site, BP and Mobil, both had a large number of signs on site (illuminated and non-illuminated) which were established in accordance with approvals from the Council (SU/12/97 and SU/1/86) or with deemed consent. The applicant advises that the illuminated signs subject to this application are basically replacements of the illuminated signs formerly on site for BP.

The four illuminated signs now proposed are considered acceptable as these are most visible from the highway and would have the most impact in attracting customers. The sign on the car wash building at the back of the site was originally proposed to also be illuminated but the applicant will now remove the illumination as it is considered unnecessary for either attracting customers or providing light during the hours of darkness.

The shades of blue used for the background and text on the signs are considered to be much more subdued and less obtrusive than the bright green and yellow shades of the previous signs approved for the site for BP.

The total number of signs on site is high but it is not considered that the site will appear unreasonably cluttered with signs. As noted above, the proposed illuminated signs are the most prominent to passers by and there is only one

clear sign on each elevation, along with the totem sign providing extra information for those approaching from the east and west. The permitted non-illuminated signs are located largely in the interior of the site where they are shielded from prominent view by the canopy or the building. The sign on the fence on the western boundary has been removed from the application as this is considered to be unnecessary and to further contribute to a proliferation of signs on the site.

Residential Amenity

The site is surrounded on all three sides by residential dwellings, with only low fencing and landscaping providing separation. There is also a line of semi-detached dwellings opposite the site on Upper Shoreham Road with open frontages and principal windows facing directly towards the site. Objections have been received from a resident directly behind the site and one directly opposite the site. The issue to be considered is whether the light generated from the illuminated signs is so excessive as to generate a nuisance to these properties.

The signs are internally illuminated and the level of illumination is stated on the application to be 100 candelas per square metre. Environmental Health has no objection to this level.

In terms of the duration of the illumination, the applicant proposes that the signs will continue to be illuminated throughout the hours of darkness. It is understood that this amount of external lighting is necessary for security surveillance of the site at night by CCTV cameras and security personnel. It is noted that the site is currently very well lit from sources other than the illumination for the signs. The site has down lights under the canopy, down lights on poles at the front and rear of the site and lights on the side of the building. It is understood that this results in the site appearing "very bright" at night and raises the question of necessity for all of the signs being illuminated constantly. Given that the canopy signs and the totem sign are located in close proximity to each other, the light emitted from the canopy down lights and the canopy signs should be sufficient to also cover the area around the totem sign. It is therefore recommended that the totem sign is only illuminated during the hours of operation of the business.

Public Safety

The signs are not considered to have an adverse effect on public or highway safety. In raising no objection, the Highways Department has noted that the level of brightness is within the maximum levels and the signs are located well back from the highway as not to have an impact upon visibility of emerging vehicles.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to :-

1. Advertisement Standard Conditions 1-5

2. C14Aii.. 2 April 2007 ... *
3. C2B (amended) The totem pole advertisement shall not ...
4. Within one month of the date of this permission, the illumination on the sign on the south elevation of the car wash building, the fixed lighting over the signage on the south and west elevations of the office building and the existing advertising sign on the fence of the western boundary shall all be removed from the site.

Case Officer: 2/4

Date: 2/04/07

Head of Planning & Community Division: Peter Davies

Date: 4.4.07

Chairman of Planning & Regulatory Committee: A. J. Mills

Date: 2/04/07

* Policy AG1, AB17 of ADLP and DEV1 of WSSP.