

Committee date	Tuesday, 4 October 2022
Application reference	22/00916/ADV - 94-98 St Albans Road
Site address	
Proposal	Consent to install branded stair core banners (banners around the slip form of stair cores - maximum 2 stair cores at any one time) and branded signage to gantry hoarding along St Albans Road in association with construction and marketing activities at the Eight Gardens development.
Applicant	Berkeley Homes North East London Ltd
Agent	None
Type of Application	Advertisement consent
Reason for committee Item	Number of objections
Target decision date	15 September 2022 (extended to 07 October 2022 by agreement)
Statutory publicity	Site notices
Case officer	Paul Baxter, paul.baxter@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Callowland

1. Recommendation

That advertisement consent be granted subject to conditions, as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located on the eastern side of St Albans Road immediately to the north of the main railway line and originally comprised a retail park with 2 retail warehouse buildings, occupied by The Range, TK Maxx and Office World, and a car wash associated with the Esso petrol station on the St Albans Road frontage. The Range building and car wash have recently been demolished. The site is accessed solely from Penn Road which bisects the site from west to east. A large proportion of the site is occupied by surface level car parking serving the retail warehouses.
- 2.2 The site is rectangular in shape and has an area of 2.56 hectares. It is bordered along its western boundary by St Albans Road which rises to the south as it passes over the railway line. St Albans Road (A412) is a major distributor road into Watford from the north and carries high traffic flows throughout the day. On the opposite side of St Albans Road is the Bedford Street 'triangle' site, part of which has recently been developed to provide 149 dwellings in 4 buildings up to 11 storeys in height (known as 'Watford Cross'). To the south

and east the site is bordered by land owned by Network Rail used as surface level car parking serving Watford Junction Station, situated a short distance to the south-east. Adjoining the site to the north is the Hille Business Centre comprising various commercial and industrial buildings.

- 2.3 The site is not located within a conservation area, however, the Bedford Street 'triangle' site to the west and the residential area to the south-west fall within the Nascot Conservation Area. The site contains no listed or locally listed buildings although there is a listed building on the opposite side of St Albans Road to the west (the Grade II listed Old Station House, the original Watford Station building) within the Bedford Street 'triangle' site. A number of locally listed buildings are sited close to the west and north of the site.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

- 3.2 Advertisement consent is sought to install branded stair core banners (banners around the slip form of stair cores - maximum 2 stair cores at any one time) and branded signage to gantry hoarding along St Albans Road. The application relates only to the southern part of the site (to the south of Penn Road) that is currently under construction.

- 3.3 The stair core banners will measure 9m wide by 4m deep and will be displayed at the top of the stair/lift cores of the towers, with one banner on each elevation. They will be non-illuminated. The phasing of the construction means that they will be displayed on two towers at a time. The first phase is Blocks S1 and S2 adjacent to St Albans Road. They will be displayed until July 2027.

- 3.4 The gantry is required to extend over the public footway on St Albans Road alongside the site in order to provide safe pedestrian access during the construction of Blocks S1 and S2. The gantry hoarding will measure 138m long by 5.8m high. The proposed signage on the hoarding will be very similar to that already approved for the existing hoarding along the St Albans Road site boundary. It will be illuminated by an LED strip along the top edge (approx. 250cd/m²). The hoarding will be in place for a period of 2 years.

3.5 Conclusion

The proposed signage will be displayed for temporary periods only during the phased construction works. It is not considered that the signage will have any harmful impacts on the amenity of the local area or on highway safety. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

4. Relevant policies

- 4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.
- 4.2 The relevant legislation for the determination of advertisement applications is the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). These Regulations at Part 1 Regulation 3, provide that the local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors.
- 4.3 National Planning Practice Guidance states that the local planning authority should assess advertisements with reference to their effect on amenity and public safety only and that unless the nature of the advertisement is in itself harmful to amenity or public safety, consent cannot be refused because the local planning authority considers the advertisement to be misleading (in so far as it makes misleading claims for products), unnecessary, or offensive to public morals.

5. Relevant site history/background information

- 5.1 19/00507/FULM - Hybrid planning application: comprising detailed planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 1,214 residential units (Use Class C3) and 2,050sqm GEA of flexible commercial floorspace (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1, D2), a new energy centre (sui generis) and associated car and cycle parking, landscaping including a new square and highway works including alterations to the existing access road. Outline planning application (all matters reserved except access) for the erection of a 2 form entry primary school and nursery (Use Class D1) of up to 2,910sqm GEA of floorspace, associated car parking and landscaping. Planning permission was granted on 25 November 2020 following the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement.
- 21/00094/NONMAT - Non-material amendment to planning permission 19/00507/FULM for the introduction of a secondary stair in the 'shoulder' section of Buildings S1 and S2, allocation and adjustment of plant rooms and service areas, amendments to the residential mix resulting from the stair

insertion and amendments to the external facade resulting from the stair insertion. Approved 23 February 2021.

21/00954/NONMAT - Non material amendment to planning permission 19/00507/FULM for changes to external details, internal alterations at roof and ground level of Buildings S1 and S2 to facilitate introduction air source heat pumps. Approved 29 June 2021.

21/01575/VARM - Variation of Condition 2 (approved drawings), to amend the design of 4 buildings located south of Penn Road comprising Phase 1B, buildings S3 and S6 and Phase 1C, buildings S4 and S5, to create 53 additional dwellings, of planning permission 19/00507/FULM granted for - Hybrid planning application: comprising detailed planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of Use Class C3 residential units and flexible commercial floorspace (Class E), public house and bar (sui generis), takeaway (sui generis), a new energy centre (sui generis) and associated car and cycle parking, landscaping including a new square and highway works including alterations to the existing access road. Outline planning application (all matters reserved except access) for the erection of a 2 form entry primary school (Class F) and nursery (Class E), associated car parking and landscaping (description as amended under planning ref. 21/01525/NONMAT). Planning permission granted on 10 June 2022.

22/00236/ADV - Consent to display eight non-illuminated pennant flags and one illuminated V-board (amended description). Consent granted 14 April 2022.

22/00237/ADV - Consent to display internally illuminated signage on hoarding on St Albans Road and Penn Road with the inclusion of two internally illuminated light boxes on St Albans Road. Signage and hoarding proposed in association with construction and marketing activities at 94-98 St Albans Road. Consent granted 29 March 2022.

22/00913/ADV - Consent to display Installation of 2 no. fascia signs comprising frosted lettering, 2 no. internally illuminated totem signs, 3 no. signs comprised of 3D illuminated letters, 2 no. panels comprised of a 3D development logo and 1 no. internally illuminated light box. Consent granted 02 September 2022.

6. Main considerations

6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of these applications are:

- (a) Impact on public amenity
- (b) Impact on public safety

6.2 (a) Impact on public amenity

Paragraph 3(2)(a) of the Regulations states that 'factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic architectural, cultural or similar interest'. The application site comprises a recently commenced large scale redevelopment to provide a mixed-use development, as set out in the planning history. The southern part of the site will contain 6 towers up to 28 storeys in height. Construction of the southern part of the site is scheduled to be completed in spring 2028.

- 6.3 The stair core banners will be displayed on two towers at a time during the period up to July 2027. They will be visible on the towers until such time as the external scaffolding/sheeting required for the construction of the external elevations of the towers rises up to the top of the towers. They will form part of the marketing of the site. The stair cores will be formed of poured concrete and in themselves will be large and unattractive features, partially covered by scaffolding and sheeting, until the external façades have been constructed. The proposed banners will marginally improve their appearance, as well as giving greater visibility to the site, during construction. In this context, it is not considered that the banners would cause any harm to the amenity of the site, nearby heritage assets or the wider area.

- 6.4 The gantry over the public footpath on St Albans Road is required for safety reasons during the construction of Blocks S1 and S2. It will be required for a period of 2 years from March 2023 until March 2025. These gantries are a common site in high density urban areas and can be installed as permitted development in relation to construction works, subject to the approval of the Highway Authority. It will measure 138m long by 5.8m high. The side of the gantry facing the road is to be clad in advertisements very similar to those approved on the site boundary hoarding, advertising the current development. In this context, it is not considered that this gantry hoarding will cause any harm to the streetscene or wider area.

6.5 (b) Impact on public safety

Paragraph 3(2)(b) of the Regulations states that factors relevant to public safety include; (i) person using any highway, (ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; (iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to

hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

- 6.6 Herts County Council as the Highway Authority have raised no objections to the stair core banners or the gantry hoarding on the grounds of highway safety.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Consultee	Comments
Herts County Council Highway Authority	No objection subject to a condition on illumination and standard informatives.

7.2 Internal Consultees

None.

7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 10 properties in the surrounding area. Site notices were also placed outside the site on St Albans Road. Responses have been received from 5 properties. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
Advertising at lower levels acceptable.	Noted.
Banners on stair cores unacceptable, unnecessary and an eyesore. Increase visibility. Unsightly. Only for commercial purposes.	In the context of the large scale construction site and the appearance of the stair cores, formed in raw concrete, it is not considered the stair core banners would cause harm.

8. Recommendation

That advertisement consent be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The stair core banners hereby approved shall only be displayed on a maximum of two stair cores at any one time. The banners shall only be displayed until July 2027 and no display shall take place after this date.

Reason: To accord with the application and having regard to the temporary nature of the advertisements.

2. The advertisements on the gantry hoarding shall only be displayed between the period of 1st March 2023 and 31st March 2025 and no advertisements shall be displayed outside of this time period.

Reason: To accord with the application and having regard to the temporary nature of the advertisements.

3. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

Site location plan
Gantry Planning Pack

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

4. The illuminated signage on the gantry hoarding shall not exceed a luminance level of 250cd/m².

Reason: To accord with the application and in the interest of public safety, in accordance with Policies 5, 17 and 21 of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Informatives

1. Highways – Projecting signs
2. Highways – Extent of highway
3. Highways – Obstruction of highway
4. Highways – Scaffold licence