

**Minutes of the Planning Committee
11 January 2023**

Present:

Councillor N.J. Gething (Chairman)
Councillor M. Gibson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

R.O. Barratt	A. Brar	K. Howkins
C. Bateson	S. Buttar	J. Vinson
M. Beecher	J. Button	S.J Whitmore

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillor B.B. Spoor who sent Councillor S.Dunn as his substitute.

In Attendance:

Councillors who are not members of the Committee, but attended the meeting and spoke on an application in or affecting their ward, are set out below in relation to the relevant application.

1/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

2/23 Disclosures of Interest

a) Disclosures of interest under the Members' Code of Conduct

There were none.

b) Declarations of interest under the Council's Planning Code

Councillors Barratt, Beecher, Brar, and Button reported that they had received correspondence in relation to application 22/01410/ADV but had maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views, and had kept an open mind.

Councillors Bateson, Gibson, Howkins, Rybinski, Sider and Vinson reported that they had received correspondence in relation to application 22/01410/ADV and had made an informal visit to the site but maintained an impartial role, had not expressed any views, and kept an open mind.

Councillor Gething reported that he had received correspondence from both the applicant and resident speaking against the application but approached the meeting with an open mind.

3/23 Planning application - 22/01410/ADV - Retail Warehouse, Stanwell Road, Ashford, TW15 3DT

Description: Retrospective application for the display of 1 no. 7.5m high illuminated totem sign

Additional Information: The Senior Planning Officer informed the Committee: The ward for this application is Ashford Town, not Staines South.

Drawing number in Condition 7 should read 4415-0103 Revision P02 (Site Location Plan).

A condition should be attached to ensure that only one totem sign is displayed within the planning unit.

Public Speaking: In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Douglas Blackwell spoke against the proposed development raising the following key points:

- The sign was visible standing at 7.5 metres high 2.7 metres wide
- Due to its placement near the bridge, the sign stood much taller than its actual height for neighbouring properties sitting below the bridge
- The sign was intrusive, looking over residents' gardens and houses
- The sign was in a residential area, not near a shopping area
- When the sign was lit it contributed to light pollution
- The totem sign was in the wrong place
- The sign could be shortened to reduce the intrusive aspect
- Other local Lidl stores did not have a similar sign at this height
- The sign was not attractive and not in keeping with the local area

In accordance with the Council's procedure for speaking at meetings, Max Clapton spoke for the proposed development raising the following key points:

- Lidl already had advert consent for a Totem sign on Stanwell Road which was granted in October 2020
- It was an honest mistake that the totem was erected in a slightly different position to that which was originally consented.
- The current proposal would minimise the level of illumination.
- Illumination would be turned off outside store opening hours and overnight

- The sign does not cause any visibility or public safety issues as confirmed by the Highways Authority
- The sign was set at an appropriate separation distance of over 40m from residential properties
- The application was in accordance with the Development Plan.
- The sign was not out of character or context with the food store use of the established retail site
- If consent was not granted, Lidl could still erect an identical totem to the South of the customer entrance as per the 2020 consent.
- The current proposal offered improvements related to siting, orientation, and lower illumination.

Debate:

During the debate the following key issues were raised:

- Such a large retail organisation should have a sympathetic approach to residents
- The sign was overly conspicuous within the street scene and for neighbouring properties
- The sign was unnecessarily high and would be sufficient at eye level height
- Local shoppers would be aware of where the Lidl is which makes the sign less relevant
- There should be consideration of a shorter sign
- There was clear representation of light pollution
- If the previous application was pursued this would cause stress and anxiety for the surrounding residents
- This application could be used as a lessons learnt example for similar proposals in future
- There was already enough signage to advertise the store
- The light pollution would affect wildlife in the area
- Consideration needed to be given to the quality of life for residents
- A compromise of a shorter sign would make significant contribution to cohesiveness of the business and residents
- A softer level of illumination was necessary
- The current proposal was preferable as it agreed to better conditions

The Committee voted on this application as follows:

For: 2

Against: 11

Abstain: 1

The motion to approve the application fell.

It was proposed by Councillor Barratt and Seconded by Councillor Rybinski that the application be deferred to allow the applicant to amend the sign to reduce the height of the totem.

The voting was as follows:

For: 14
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Decision: The recommendation to approve was **not agreed** and the application was **deferred** to allow the applicant an opportunity to consider whether to submit an amended application for a sign on a totem of reduced height.

4/23 Major Planning Applications

The Planning Development Manager submitted a report outlining major applications that may be brought before the Planning Committee for determination.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.

5/23 Planning Appeals Report

The Chairman informed the Committee that if any Member had any detailed queries regarding the report on Appeals lodged and decisions received since the last meeting, they should contact the Planning Development Manager.

Resolved that the report of the Planning Development Manager be received and noted.