

# OFFICER REPORT

**Application Ref:** EPF/2106/23  
**Application Type:** Consent to display an advertisement  
**Applicant:** Mr Jon Pennell  
**Case Officer:** Caroline Brown  
**Site Address:** Hannah Nursery, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, E4 7RG  
**Proposal:** RETROSPECTIVE - One Fascia sign adjacent to the site entrance from Sewardstone Road 200cm(w) x 100cm(h). White board with black writing bearing the name of the site and postal code affixed to the exterior of the site boundary fencing. No company names, services or products are listed/shown.

**Ward:** Waltham Abbey High Beach  
**Parish:** Waltham Abbey  
**View Plans:** <https://eppingforestdcpr.force.com/pr/s/planning-application/a0h8d000001XS3f>  
**Recommendation:** Approve with Conditions



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*This application is before this Committee since it is for a type of development that cannot be determined by Officers if more than five objections are received (or in cases where less than 5 were consulted, a majority of those consulted object) on grounds material to the planning merits of the proposal (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part 3: Scheme of Delegation to Officers from Full Council).*

### **Description of Site:**

Hannah Nursery' was historically a long-established horticultural site comprising of blocks of glasshouses, located to the west of Sewardstone Road, to the rear of residential properties fronting onto Sewardstone Road. Access lies in between 2 bungalows with a 4.5m wide vehicular access track that runs down the centre of the site.

Glasshouses cover a significant proportion of the site and a number of other buildings on the southern side comprising of two former packing shed buildings. The area to the west of Sewardstone Road is concentrated by nurseries and horticultural nurseries within the boundaries of the Green Belt.

A large former packhouse building replaced a block of glasshouses approved in 2012 Ref: EPF/1621/12. Due to the long term vacancy of the glasshouses and the a decline in the viability of the nursery, planning permission was granted in February 2019 for the change of use of the large former packing shed to Class B2 general industrial use and for the use of an adjacent glasshouse for ancillary car storage, related parking for a total of 16 cars, landscaping to the west of the glasshouses and tree planting along the western periphery of the site and the demolition of the existing scaffolding unit. (Ref: EPF/3345/18).

In 2019, the former packhouse was subdivided into 3 units, one of which was for the manufacture of double-glazed windows and doors and the other 2 Units B & C used for the repair and servicing of motor vehicles to the western end of the site with an area of hardstanding subdivided by metal fencing used for the parking of cars and 2 portacabins for use in connection with Unit C.

The site lies within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt, no Listed Buildings attributed to the site, and it is not within a Conservation Area.

### **Description of Development:**

The application seeks to regularise advertisement consent for the display of one non-illuminated sign located to the front entrance of the site measuring 200cm(w) x 100cm(h). The sign has a white background with black writing bearing the name of the site and postal code affixed to the exterior of the site boundary fencing. No company names, services or products are listed/shown.

### **Relevant History:**

EPF/2356/20 - Use of former glasshouse for the display of cars for sale; use of industrial unit in part of former packing shed building for ancillary storage of cars and as ancillary offices and provision of 8 ancillary staff car parking spaces.- Retrospective -

EPF/3345/18: Demolition of existing scaffolding unit, removal of existing fencing and portacabins, use of existing building for Class B2 industrial use and adjacent glasshouse for ancillary car at Hannah Nursery, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex – approved - February 2019.

EPF/1621/12 Demolition of the existing glasshouse and the erection of a new pack house - Approved.  
EPF/2408/07 Erection of agricultural tie dwelling - Refused 04/01/08 (Allowed on Appeal) - Not Implemented.

EPF/0976/96 Erection of new glasshouses - Approved 24/09/96.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Epping Forest District Local Plan (2011-2033) (March 2023)**

On 9 February 2023, the council received the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 to 2033. The Inspector's Report concludes that subject to the Main Modifications set out in the appendix to the report, the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 -2033 satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and meets the criteria for soundness as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and is capable of adoption.

The proposed adoption of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011- 2033 was considered at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 6 March 2023 and formally adopted by the Council.

The following policy is relevant

T1 - Sustainable Transport Choices  
DM9 - High Quality Design  
DM13 - Advertisements

### **NPPF, 2023**

The revised NPPF is a material consideration in determining planning applications.  
The following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered to be of relevance to this application:

137-149 of the NPPF.

### **Consultation Carried Out and Summary of Representations Received:**

WALTHAM ABBEY PARISH COUNCIL - No Objection.

18 Residents Notified : 6 Objections

#### **Meadow View, Sewardstone Rd:**

- Sign gives the impression that it is a nursery confusing the public there is no need for 2 signs that are so big and far too obvious in a green belt area.

#### **Starlings, Sewardstone Road:**

Oversized and unsightly

#### **Golden Elm, Sewardstone Road**

- The two new oversized, obtrusive signs are not in keeping with the area, the previous sign which had been in situ for many years was smaller and more suitable for Hannah Nursery.- set a precedent for the area.

The signs on all houses on Sewardstone Road are all small and modest and we still receive post and deliveries.

#### **Woodlands, Sewardstone Road**

- they are too large, unprofessional, they are not signs just white boards with black letters on. The application states that these signs are advertisement signs. For these signs to be advertisement a license would be needed to advertise a business. Hannah Nurseries is no longer a business in its own right Hannah nurseries is now just a cover for predominantly illegal businesses to operate.

The original Hannah Nursery sign was of an acceptable size and fitted in with the historic nature and abeyance of Sewardstone Road and the rest of the names properties either side of Hannah Nurseries. signs are unsightly, unprofessional and more suited to an industrial estate not to a rural residential area setting, this is yet another planning application which is not conducive to a residential environment.

Brigadoon Sewardstone Road.

- massive signs on the entrance of Hannah Nursery as they are unsightly and will set a precedent for others to erect further massive signs in what is supposed to be classed as a rural hamlet.

Amended plans Received for one sign only. A re-consultation exercise was undertaken, and one objection received.

Brigadoon, Sewardstone Road

We object to these massive signs on the entrance of Hannah Nursery as they are unsightly and will set a precedent for others to erect further massive signs in what is supposed to be classed as a rural hamlet.

Marjadee, Sewardstone Road

We strongly object to this sign. It is far too large and will be of inferior style and quality. Sewardstone is a village and Hannah Nurseries is part of a conservation area. If there is to be a sign it should be discreet and in keeping with the countryside.

Further, while there is the abuse of usage of the site with, we understand, an enforcement order to desist ongoing, we and all residents bordering Hannah Nursery are fed up with the noise and downright ugliness that this site has descended into. The new owners have destroyed what was a beautiful green space and it has to stop.

Meadow View, Sewardstone Road

Object to the size of the signs far too large as there is no nursery there anymore it's not necessary to advertise it and we as residents are only allowed a small sign of the name of our property as there are no numbers for the postman to identify.

### **Issues and Considerations:**

The main issues to consider are:

- Impact of amenity
- Impact on highway safety

Hannah Nursery is located in the Green Belt and where the past horticultural use has now ceased, and the Council has granted permission to convert existing buildings to alternative commercial uses and where a front sign for Hannah Nursery has always existed.

The site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial uses. Many of the commercial uses on Sewardstone Road have singular front signage such as at 'Ashbrook Court' Care Home, 'Netherhouse Farm Cemetery/Crematorium' with 2 smaller ones on either side of the entrance at Northfields.

Since the uses of commercial units within the site has increased, a number of unauthorised signs have appeared to the entrance of the site which have now been removed and the application seeks consent for one sign on the front boundary to the southwest, close to the entrance.

DM13 states that advertisements will be permitted if the proposal respects the interests of public safety and amenity taking into account five criteria:

- *the design, materials and location of the advertisement respects the scale and character of the building on which it is displayed and the surrounding area.*
- *the proposals would not result in a cluttered street scene, excessive signage, or result in a proliferation of signs advertising a single site or enterprise.*
- *any illumination will be considered in relation to its impact on visual amenity, potential for light pollution, road safety and functional need.*
- *Internally illuminated signs will not be permitted where harm is caused to heritage assets including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas; and*
- *to safeguard residential and visual amenity, illuminated signs will not be permitted in residential areas to protect the general characteristics of such areas.*

The signage has been amended from 2 signs to one and is considered in accordance with policy DM13 given its simple design and form resulting in no significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or to the purposes of including land within it and not constitute inappropriate development.

The sign would maintain the visual character and appearance of the surrounding area and complies with local Plan policy.

#### Impact on neighbouring amenity

The concerns expressed by the residents are noted. The original 2.No. signs has been amended to just one sign and does not involve any external/internal lighting. It's scale and siting is not considered to result in any demonstrable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties and accords with the requirements of policy DM9 of the Local Plan, (2011-2033), 2023.

#### Highway safety

The Highway Authority raises no objections as it is not contrary to the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011 and Policy T1 of the Local Plan and the NPPF 2023.

#### **Conclusion**

For the reasons set out above, having regard to all matters raised, the signage is appropriate in its context and would not significantly prejudice the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining properties. Other aspects in relation to highway safety are considered satisfactory and is supported by the policies in the adopted Local Plan, (2011-2033), 2023 and the NPPF, 2023. In light of the above considerations, it is recommended that Advertisement Consent is approved.

***Should you wish to discuss the contents of this report item please use the following contact details by 2pm on the day of the meeting at the latest:***

***Planning Application Case Officer: Caroline Brown***

***Direct Line Telephone Number: 01992 564182***

**or if no direct contact can be made, please email: [contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**

**Conditions: (6)**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location and Block Plans; photographs;

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the proposal is built in accordance with the approved plans.

- 2 No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the highway authority, if the sign is to be placed on highway land).

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- 3 No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to;

a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or

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

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- 4 Any advertisement must be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- 5 Any advertisement hoarding or structure is to be kept in a condition which does not endanger the public.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

- 6 If an advertisement is required to be removed, the site must be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

**Informatives: (1)**

- 7 The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.