

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00628/AD	Installation of EV charging signage, including charger identification labels, operational instructions, directional signage, CCTV notices, and safety information.	Morrisons Superstore Broadway Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3TS

Submitted Plan Nos

14313-2126-LP Rev C 14313-2126-CTA-1 Rev D 14313-2126-BP Rev C 14313-2126-CTA-1 RevC

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 26/00250/AD - Erection of no.1 5 meter internally illuminated totem signage.

Refused.

2.2 25/00466/FP - Installation of EV charging zones, including the erection of sub-station enclosure, LV panel, meter cabinet and associated works.

Conditional Permission.

2.3 24/01035/FP - Installation of EV charging zones, including the erection of sub-station enclosure, LV panel, meter cabinet and associated works (amended plans received 17.06.2024).

Refused.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation** – Objection raised to the size and siting of sign 12 (Totem Pole).

3.2 **HCC Highways** – No objection.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 Morrisons Superstore is a large supermarket and car park located between Station Way and Broadway within the Letchworth Town Centre. The site has vehicle access onto both roads. The site is within the Letchworth Conservation Area. The proposed development would be in the northwest corner of the site fronting onto Station Way.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Permission is sought for the erection of

- ☐ 1 no. 5x1.785x0.7m freestanding illuminated totem pole
- ☐ 3 no. 0.9x0.6m bracket mounted signs (non illuminated, vinyl graphic).
- ☐ 2 no. 1.5x2m & 1.5x5m fence panel sign (non illuminated vinyl graphic).

4.2.2 The proposed signs are white, blue and green for the purpose of advertising the electric vehicle chargers and brand.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues in the determination of this application are the amenity of the area and public safety.

4.3.2 The principle issue in the determination of advertisement applications is whether the sign would have an adverse impact on the surroundings amenity as well as any safety impacts of the sign. Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that “the quality and character of places can suffer

when advertisements are poorly sited and designed...Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.”

- 4.3.3 Whilst it is acknowledged that totem signs are commonplace for supermarkets and commercial areas throughout the district, I find that the proposed signage would be contrary to the local character and would harm the setting of the Conservation Area for the reasons set out within this report.
- 4.3.4 Station Way has a relatively rural, verdant character, emphasised by the tree lined street and cycle path which gives it a wider, open appearance. The street is devoid of any commercial signage and transitions into a residential street to the west, with dwellings and driveways fronting the road. Although the signage would be sited within the car park which has a relatively commercial character, the position of the signage would directly front Station Way and therefore impact its character. Whilst the trees would provide some minor screening, given the scale, illumination and prominent position, both the totem pole sign and fence signage would be highly visible to the users of the road and footpath along Station Way and when entering the site.
- 4.3.5 I consider that the proposed totem pole signage would constitute an isolated, tall form of development which due to the distance, would not relate to the buildings within the site. The scale of the signs would be intrusive to the character of Station Way, and is excessive for its intentions. The proposal would be an overbearing form of development on the public realm.
- 4.3.6 Furthermore, the scale and design of the sign and their cumulative impact would harm the wider setting of the conservation area. The application was raised with NHC’s Senior Conservation Officer and it was considered that the signage, would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as required by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In respect of Policy HE1 of the Local Plan, the signage by virtue of its size, location, colour and contemporary form would not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The Council have in the past been robust in their challenges against what is considered poorly designed commercial signage in Conservation Areas, favouring more traditional form and modest scale to ensure historic character is maintained, which cannot be said for the signage herein.
- 4.3.7 No covering letter or justification has been submitted. There are no other Totem signs within this part of the Letchworth Conservation Area and this proposal would set a harmful precedent. This level of harm is deemed to be low to moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum, there are no public benefits associated with this development that outweigh the identified harm to the significance of the relevant designated heritage assets.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 By reason of the siting, size, scale and design of the proposed estate signage, it is considered that the advertisement would adversely impact the visual amenity of the sites surroundings and the Letchworth Conservation Area. Whilst there are no objections on the grounds of public safety, subject to conditions, the harm to general characteristics of the locality are sufficient reason for the Local Planning Authority to utilise the power transferred under

Regulation 14 (1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) to refuse consent. The signage would not accord with Policy HE6 the NPPF or Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031, which are material considerations and determination of this application. The degree of harm is considered to be low - moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That advertisement consent be **REFUSED** for the following reason(s):

1. By reason of the siting, size, scale and design (colour and internal illumination) of the proposed totem signage, it is considered that the advertisement would adversely impact the visual amenity of the site's surroundings within the Letchworth Conservation Area. Whilst there are no objections on the grounds of public safety, subject to conditions, the harm to general characteristics of the locality are sufficient reason for the Local Planning Authority to utilise the power transferred under Regulation 14 (1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) to refuse consent. The totem signage would not accord with Policy HE6 of the National Planning Policy Framework or Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031, which are material considerations in assessing the effect of the proposal upon amenity.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 22 September 2026	