

REF: R01266/MR/DB/GO
SUBMITTED VIA PLANNING PORTAL ONLY

North Herts Council
Planning Department
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth
SG6 9SE

15th May 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION TO INSTALL A NEW SHOPFRONT
APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT TO INSTALL 6 NO. ADVERTS
10 HIGH STREET, HITCHIN, SG5 1BH

I write on behalf of the Applicant, Tesco Stores Ltd, to submit three separate planning applications for the Site at 10 High Street, Hitchin, SG5 1BH as follows:

- Application for full planning permission to install a new shopfront; and
- Application for advertisement consent to install 6 no. adverts.

The applications are detailed separately in this letter.

Background to Applications

The Site, consisting of the ground floor unit at 10 High Street, Hitchin, SG5 1BH is currently vacant but was formerly occupied by an M&Co clothes store. The Site is not locally or statutory listed, but it is situated within the Hitchin Conservation Area. Further information regarding heritage considerations can be found within the Heritage Statement prepared by ROK Planning and submitted with these applications.

The original host consent permitting retail use at the Site is unavailable, but the available planning history for the Site shows that it has been used for retail purposes since the 1980s.

The unit, permitted for retail uses, is proposed to be occupied as a Tesco Express. No planning permission is required for this in land use terms. These applications solely seek permission for the minor works required to facilitate this occupation.

Proposed Works

Installation of new shopfront

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a new shopfront, consisting of proposed new aluminium automatic bi-parting doors with above glazing to be installed and frames to be painted Anthracite RAL 7016; and proposed new shopfront glazing to be installed and frames to be painted Anthracite RAL 7016.

Additional information on the shopfront application is available on the following drawings prepared by Tesco:

- Location Plan (drawing no. 01_3289_01A);
- Existing Elevation (drawing no. 03_3289_03C);
- Existing Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02E);
- Existing Site Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02D);
- Proposed Elevation (drawing no. 03_3289_03D); and
- Proposed Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02F).

Advertisement Consent

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of 6 adverts as follows;

- New non-illuminated box fascia in aluminium, powder coated Blue RAL 5005, 30% Gloss with Brown Arizona Oak woodtex strip to base. Store Address and Est. year vinyl lettering applied to new fascia. Year - 100mm ht;
- New Box fascia in aluminium, powder coated white RAL 9010. Acrylic letters with 'Tesco' in opal 030 Avery 4509 Red 431, and 'express' and blips in Opal 030
- Avery 5600 LD/082A blue letters. Externally illuminated via Trough Light;
- New non-illuminated box fascia in aluminium, powder coated Blue RAL 5005, 30% Gloss with Brown Arizona Oak woodtex strip to base;
- New projecting sign externally illuminated via Trough Light in Aluminium, Powder coated white RAL 9010 with Tesco in opal 030 Avery 4509 Red 431, 'express' and blips in Opal 030-Avery 5600 LD/082A blue letters. Sides, top and bottom to be blue as per fascia;
- Store Directory, glazing vinyl to be applied internally. Blue Ref: TRU 35-A7; and
- New vinyls to be applied internally up to 1995mm to the glazing. Avery 800-01 off white Chiffon Vinyl to be applied on reverse.

Additional details on the adverts are available on the following proposed drawings prepared by Tesco:

- Existing Elevation (drawing no. 03_3289_03A);

- Existing Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02B);
- Existing Site Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02A);
- Proposed Elevation (drawing no. 03_3289_03B);
- Proposed Plan (drawing no. 02_3289_02C);
- Location Plan (drawing no. 01_3289_01A);
- Projecting Sign Details (drawing no. Projecting+Sign+V2.1);
- Externally Illuminated Fascia Sign Details (drawing no. BOX FASCIA _EXTERNAL ILLUMINATION DETAIL); and
- Non-illuminated Fascia Sign Details (drawing no. BOX FASCIA NON ILLUMINATION DETAIL).

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (2022). Material considerations include relevant supplementary planning documents and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (2022)

'Policy D1: Sustainable design' of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, highlights the following regarding the design of development proposals:

"Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:

- a) Respond positively to the site's local context;*
- b) Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:*
 - i. create or enhance public realm;*
 - ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);*
 - iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;*
 - iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;*
 - v. maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;*
 - vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;*
 - vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and*
 - viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;*
- c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance..."*

Further to this, 'Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire', states:

"This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will:

- a) Maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land where possible;*
- b) Ensure the long-term vitality of the District's villages by supporting growth which provides opportunities for existing and new residents and sustains key facilities;*
- c) Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively:*
 - i. deliver an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan;*
 - ii. create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices;*
 - iii. provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population;*
 - iv. protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including biodiversity, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and*
 - v. secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and*
- d) Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan."*

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF is an additional material consideration. It is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development and in terms of that presumption, Paragraph 11 states that for decision taking this means *"approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay..."*

Paragraph 85 goes on to advise that *"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth."*

Planning Justification

As noted earlier in this letter, full planning permission is sought for the installation of a new shopfront and advertisement consent is sought for the installation of 6 no. advertisements.

Full Planning Permission for Shopfront

While the Site itself is neither locally nor statutory listed, the proposed shopfront solution is still designed to have a minimal impact on the building's existing façade, the neighbouring Hitchin Conservation Area, and any nearby listed buildings. This complies with both 'Policy D1: Sustainable design', and 'Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire', of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. On this basis, the proposed shopfront is in line with local and national policy and is therefore considered acceptable.

Advertisement Consent

Advertisement consent is sought for signage as detailed previously in this letter. The advertisements are proposed to be externally illuminated in line with similar advertisements in the area mindful of its commercial context. The illumination will be static and of a low-level, via external trough lights.

In terms of visual amenity, the proposed signage is in considered to be in keeping with the previously accepted design rationale for the unit. Furthermore, the proposal utilises externally illuminated signage, a generally accepted form of illumination in heritage locations. All illumination will be of static nature, at a low level, and the use of aluminium will ensure durability. For further detail in respect of visual amenity and heritage considerations, please refer to the Heritage Statement submitted with this application.

As above, all adverts will be of a low level and static illumination. On that basis, no adverse impact on highway safety is anticipated. Moreover, all adverts are positioned so as to not restrict any pedestrian walkways. This complies with both 'Policy D1: Sustainable design', and 'Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire', of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

On that basis, it is considered that the proposals will not have an unacceptable impact on amenity.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed works will be in keeping with the lawful use of the unit and the wider area in terms of its commercial context. They have been designed so as to not disturb the street scene nor impact the character of the wider conservation area. There will be no adverse impact on public amenity or safety.

Consequently, it is concluded that there are no policy grounds for objection to the application proposal, and we respectfully request that the application is granted.

Contents of Submissions

The following supporting documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal in support of the applications:

- The relevant planning application fees;

- The completed application forms;
- This covering letter prepared by ROK Planning;
- Heritage statement prepared by ROK Planning;
- Location plan and block plan prepared by Tesco; and
- Existing and proposed drawings prepared by Tesco

I trust that you have all the information you require to validate this application. If, in the interim, you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Matthew Roe (matthew.roe@rokplanning.co.uk) or myself at this office. I look forward to your formal acknowledgement of the application.

Yours faithfully,



Daniel Botten
Senior Associate Director
ROK Planning Ltd



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