

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 22 May 2025

25/0651/ADV - Advertisement Consent: Installation of a welcome sign at Rickmansworth Aquadrome (Riverside Drive pedestrian and cycle entrance) at Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Riverside Drive, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1NB.

Parish: Batchworth Community Council
Expiry of Statutory Period: 09.06.2025

Ward: Rickmansworth Town
Case Officer: Danielle Kavanagh

Recommendation: That subject to no new material planning considerations being raised during the open consultation period, that advertisement consent be GRANTED subject to conditions.

Reason for consideration by the Committee: The application has been brought to Committee as the applicant is Three Rivers District Council.

To view all documents forming part of this application please go to the following website:
[25/0651/ADV - Advertisement Consent: Installation of a welcome sign at Rickmansworth Aquadrome \(Riverside Drive pedestrian and cycle entrance\) at Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Riverside Drive, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1NB.](#)

1 Relevant Planning History

- 1.1 23/1139/FUL - Replacement of existing pedestrian bridge over the River Colne with a new pedestrian and cycle bridge including upgraded footpaths, fencing, seating areas.- 24.10.2023 – Permitted, Implemented.

2 Description of Application Site

- 2.1 Rickmansworth Aquadrome is an allocated area of public open space centred around two lakes, known as Batchworth Lake and Bury Lake and located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is a designated Local Wildlife Site, and Local Nature Reserve supporting a variety of habitats. The Aquadrome provides surfaced walks and nature trails, children's play areas, outdoor gym, café and sporting facilities such as Bury Lake Young Mariners Club. The Aquadrome is served by one vehicular access point from Frogmore Lane which provides access to a large car park. There are also varying pedestrian entrances including from Riverside Drive, which leads to a play area and footbridge over the River Colne, both of which are undergoing redevelopment currently.
- 2.2 The application site is of an irregular shape and relates to a small area of the Aquadrome, located to the north of Batchworth Lake and to the east of both the children's play area and a boat house which currently facilitates the Waterskiing Club. The site is located immediately adjacent to the children's play area. The site extends to the boundary with Riverside Drive, with this boundary consisting of open metal railings. Within the site is a footpath which provides access from Riverside Drive into the Aquadrome. The footpath provides access to The Aquadrome Bridge, a recently replaced pedestrian footbridge over the River Colne, which is classed as a main river. The footbridge and pathway to Riverside Drive are part of National Cycle Network 6.
- 2.3 To the east of the footpath and opposite the children's play area is an area of grassland and a seating and picnic area.

3 Description of Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application seeks Advertisement Consent for the installation of a welcome sign at Rickmansworth Aquadrome, Riverside Drive pedestrian and cycle entrance.

- 3.2 The proposed signage would be sited at the Riverside Drive pedestrian and cycle entrance, between a picnic area and the Ebury Play Area. The sign would be set back from the public footway by approximately 4m, with 1.8m of space available on either side of the sign to allow ingress and egress of pedestrians and cyclists to the Aquadrome.
- 3.3 The signage would facilitate a welcome sign and read 'Welcome to Rickmansworth Aquadrome'. The sign's structure would be aluminium, finished with a Corten-effect spray for a textured weathered appearance. The printed front and back panels would be applied to aluminium and securely fixed to the structure. The panels would be made from high-grip outdoor vinyl, with an anti-graffiti seal applied to prolong their durability. The sign base would be a gabion cage base filled with cobblestones. The sign would measure approximately 2m wide, 0.4m deep and 1.9m high, and would be non-illuminated.

4 Statutory Consultation

4.1 National Grid: [No response received]

4.2 Batchworth Community Council: [Objection]

BCC strongly objects to this application.

' The position will inhibit pedestrian traffic flow at both ingress and egress access on the bridge.

' The size and location of the signage could create a potential hazard regarding sight lines for pedestrians and cyclists.

' It will create confusion regarding directional flow of traffic for both pedestrian and mobility aid users. (i.e keep left or keep right)

' No maintenance programme has been provided. BCC needs reassurance that the signage will be maintained to ensure public safety.

Officer Note: The applicant has confirmed that, as the sign would be Three Rivers District Council Property, it would be maintained as part of the council's maintenance program of assets.

4.3 Hertfordshire County Council Highways: [No Objection]

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

The proposed sign is not located on any land that is considered to be highway and is not to be illuminated. The proposed sign is located on a path which is part of the wider aquadrome site but is not highway. Whilst not a specific highways issue, consideration would need to be taken as to how the proposed signage may affect pedestrians and cyclists visibility as both would be using the shared path.

HCC as Highway Authority has assessed the proposals and would not have an objection from a highways perspective, subject to the inclusion of the following informatives:

AN) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

4.4 **Public/Neighbour Consultation**

4.5 Number consulted: 0. Number of responses received: 1

4.6 Summary of responses received:

Commenter does not object to the principle of a sign, however, the proposal is seen as too large and sited in the wrong position, and would be obstructive to pedestrian flows and those with mobility problems. They consider that there is a lack of information explaining the chosen positioning and where the sign will be seen from.

4.7 Site Notice: Posted: 23.04.2025, Expiry 15.05.2025

4.8 Press Notice: Printed: 28.04.2025, Expiry 24.05.2025

5 **Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation**

5.1 Legislation

Outdoor advertisements are within the scope of the control regime specified by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements Regulations 2007 (as amended)).

Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out within S38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

In 2024 the new National Planning Policy Framework was published. This is read alongside the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The determination of planning applications is made mindful of Central Government advice and the Local Plan for the area. It is recognised that Local Planning Authorities must determine applications in accordance with the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against another. The NPPF is clear that "existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework".

The NPPF states that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'. The NPPF retains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This applies unless any adverse impacts of a development would 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits.

5.3 The Three Rivers Local Plan

The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies CP1, CP9, CP10, CP11 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (DMLDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM1, DM2, DM6, DM13 and Appendices 2 and 5.

5.4 Other

The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038 (Submission Version) has been subject of a referendum where more than half of those who voted have voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan being used to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area. On that basis significant weight can be given to the plan in Decision Making. Relevant policies include: BW GB1, BW GB3, BW DE1 and BW DE2. The Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Code is also relevant.

6 Planning Analysis

6.1 Advert Regulations

- 6.1.1 Outdoor advertisements are within the scope of the control regime specified by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).
- 6.1.2 This regime enables local planning authorities to control advertisements, when it is justified, in the interests of “amenity” and “public safety”.
- 6.1.3 Amenity is not defined in the regulations, although it includes aural and visual amenity and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality and the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.
- 6.1.4 Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. It also advises that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

6.2 Design and Impact on the Streetscene

- 6.2.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design, the Council will expect development proposals to have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area.
- 6.2.2 Policy BW DE1 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038 (Submission Version) sets out that new development in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan area shall be based upon a design-led approach to development underpinned by good practice principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal. Development should respond positively to guidance and principles established in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Code. BW GB3 sets

out that all development should take opportunities afforded by site location to improve access to green and blue infrastructure that supports walking, wheeling and horse riding. Routes should be suitable for use in all weather conditions, be well signed and clearly defined.

- 6.2.3 No specific guidance is provided within the Neighbourhood Plan regarding advertisements. The application site does not fall within a defined character area as set out in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Code. The Design Code's area-wide design guidance provides overarching design guidance for the whole of the Batchworth area and is relevant in this case.
- 6.2.4 The proposal would include the installation of a new sign, designed to welcome the community to Rickmansworth Aquadrome from the Riverside Drive entrance. The sign's structure would be aluminium, finished with a Corten-effect spray for a textured weathered appearance. The printed front and back panels would be applied to aluminium and securely fixed to the structure. The base would be a gabion cage filled with cobblestones.
- 6.2.5 The sign would be relatively large at approximately 2m wide, 0.4m deep and 1.9m high, and it is considered to result in a notable feature as viewed from vantage points on Riverside Drive. However, viewing opportunities are limited to when travelling northwest towards the Ebury roundabout, the sign would only become noticeable at the entrance to the Aquadrome. From the other perspective, when exiting the Ebury roundabout travelling south east, or using the pedestrian crossing at the junction of Riverside Drive and the Ebury roundabout, the proposed sign would become clearly visible only after passing the roundabout's junction with Wensum Way. These short-range views of the sign are considered to be appropriate for its purpose to welcome pedestrians and cyclists to the Aquadrome. It is considered that the proposed sign is clearly defined and supports wayfinding and access to the green and blue infrastructure of the Aquadrome.
- 6.2.6 Views of the sign are considered to be relatively well contained, with no long-range views of the sign possible from the wider area, or from the majority of the Aquadrome site. The siting of the sign and the surrounding landscape mean that the sign will be visible to pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity who may be seeking the entrance to the Aquadrome, but not so prominent that it is overtly visible within the street scene.
- 6.2.7 The sign will be located close to a picnic area and playground, therefore, there are other structures of varying height and materials in the vicinity, such as play equipment and picnic benches. The sign has been designed to incorporate elements of the picnic area, such as the cobble-filled gabion cages, and to have a weathered effect finish to help it blend into the surrounding area and sit comfortably within its surroundings. The sign would be non-illuminated. It is considered that the sign would not result in an unduly urbanising, prominent or contrived feature within the street scene or significantly detract from the character of the Aquadrome or wider area.
- 6.2.8 In summary, the proposed advertisement would not result in any adverse harm to the character or appearance of the area. The advertisement would be acceptable in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy, Policies BW GB3 and BW DE1 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan, and the principles set out in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Design Code.

6.3 Impact on Amenity and Public Safety

- 6.3.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy states that development should 'protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space'.

- 6.3.2 The proposed sign would be set back from the public footway by approximately 4m, with 1.8m of space available on either side of the sign to allow ingress and egress of people and cyclists to the Aquadrome via the newly constructed Aquadrome Bridge. Concerns have been raised by Batchworth Community Council and a member of the public regarding the size and location of the sign. The applicant confirmed the Three Rivers Sustainable Transport Officer was involved during the design process, the gap of 1.8 meters either side of the sign, without bollards, was a considered choice to allow enough space to comply with Disability Discrimination Act guidance for access, and to allow the structure of the sign to act as a deterrent for vehicle incursion into the shared pathway, in the interest of public safety. The shared pathway is part of National Cycle Network Route 6, a design without bollards was chosen to support the ease of movement of cyclists around the proposed sign structure.
- 6.3.3 The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan defines the Ebury Roundabout as a 'Gateway location', policy BW DE2 sets out that any development in gateway locations is expected to enhance the sense of arrival through improved wayfinding through the provision of a legible development structure, signage, planting and public art. The application site is adjacent to this defined gateway location, the proposed sign is considered to be a positive improvement to wayfinding in the area, aiding the movement of foot and wheeled traffic from the surrounding local area to The Aquadrome via the new Aquadrome Bridge.
- 6.3.4 As for visual amenity, the signage would largely be screened from view from the closets neighbouring properties on Ebury Road, owing to the separation of these dwellings from the application site and the dense area of vegetation between Ebury Road and Riverside Drive. Given that the signage would not be illuminated and would be set back from the highway, it is not considered that there would be any safety impact on vehicular traffic as a result of its implementation. It is noted that Highways has no objection to the proposal. The signage is unlikely to be visible from the wider area, given the separation distances between the nearest buildings it is not considered that the signage would result in harm.
- 6.3.5 Overall, it is not considered that the proposal would impose on any neighbouring residential or commercial units nor would it result in an adverse impact on the neighbouring residents. The development is considered to enhance public safety by providing a solid structural deterrent to vehicular ingress of the Riverside Drive entrance to the Aquadrome. The development would be acceptable in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and policy BW DE2 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan.

6.4 Trees & Landscape

- 6.4.1 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD sets out that development proposals should seek to retain trees and other landscape and nature conservation features, and that proposals should demonstrate that trees will be safeguarded and managed during and after development in accordance with the relevant British Standards. The proposed development would not involve the removal of any trees or lie in close proximity to trees.
- 6.4.2 The application site is not located within a Conservation Area and no trees would be affected as a result of the proposed development. The proposal is considered acceptable in this regard.

6.5 Wildlife considerations

- 6.5.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive places a legal duty on all public bodies to have regard to the habitats directive when carrying out their functions.

- 6.5.2 The assessment of applications shall be in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the DMP LDD and the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). The NPPF sets out that Local Authorities must ensure that a protected species survey is undertaken for applications that may be affected prior to the determination of an application. Policy BW GB1: Biodiversity of the Batchworth Neighbourhood plan sets out that proposals must manage impacts on biodiversity.
- 6.5.3 The application for advertisement consent does not include illumination - as no light would be produced and the size of the advertisement in the context of the site is limited, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on any protected species.

7 Recommendation

That subject to no new material planning considerations being raised during the open consultation period, that ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT be GRANTED subject to the following conditions: C1 1] The period of the validity of this permission is for five years commencing from the date of the decision notice.

2] No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

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.

4] Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

5] Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

6] Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity

Reason: To comply with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011).

- C2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and maintained with the following approved plans: 22762-AHR-XX-XX-DR-A-SK-016 REV04, TRDC001, TRDC002, TRDC003, TRDC004, TRDC005, TRDC006

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, in the proper interests of planning in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 2007 (as amended), Policies CP1, CP9, CP10 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policies DM6, DM9 and DM13 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and Policies BW GB1, BW GB3, BW DE1 and BW DE2 of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan.

Informatives

- I1 With regard to implementing this permission, the applicant is advised as follows:

All relevant planning conditions must be discharged prior to the commencement of work. Requests to discharge conditions must be made by formal application and include a fee.

There may be a requirement for the approved development to comply with the Building Regulations. Please contact Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) on 01438 879990 or at buildingcontrol@hertfordshirebc.co.uk who will be happy to advise you on building control matters and will protect your interests throughout your build project by leading the compliance process. Further information is available at www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Your development may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Officer for clarification with regard to this (cil@threeivers.gov.uk). If your development is CIL liable, even if you have been granted exemption from the levy, please be advised that before commencement of any works it is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (As Amended) that CIL form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Three Rivers District Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you lose the right to payment by instalments (where applicable), and a surcharge will be imposed. However, please note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions if relief has been granted.

Following the grant of planning permission by the Local Planning Authority it is accepted that new issues may arise post determination, which require modification of the approved plans. Please note that regardless of the reason for these changes, where these modifications are fundamental or substantial, a new planning application will need to be submitted. Where less substantial changes are proposed, the following options are available to applicants:

{\b (a)} Making a Non-Material Amendment

{\b (b)} Amending the conditions attached to the planning permission, including seeking to make minor material amendments (otherwise known as a section 73 application).

It is important that any modifications to a planning permission are formalised before works commence otherwise your planning permission may be unlawful and therefore could be subject to enforcement action. In addition, please be aware that changes to a development previously granted by the LPA may affect any previous Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) owed or exemption granted by the Council. If you are in any doubt whether the new/amended development is now liable for CIL you are advised to contact the Community Infrastructure Levy Officer (01923 776611) for clarification. Information regarding CIL can be found on the Three Rivers website (<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/community-infrastructure-levy>).

Care should be taken during the building works hereby approved to ensure no damage occurs to the verge or footpaths during construction. Vehicles delivering materials to this development shall not override or cause damage to the public footway. Any damage will require to be made good to the satisfaction of the Council and at the applicant's expense.

Where possible, energy saving and water harvesting measures should be incorporated. Any external changes to the building which may be subsequently required should be discussed with the Council's Development Management Section prior to the commencement of work. Further information on how to incorporate changes to reduce your energy and water use is available at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/environment-climate-emergency/home-energy-efficiency-sustainable-living#Greening%20your%20home>

- 12 The applicant is reminded that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 stipulates that construction activity (where work is audible at the site boundary) should be restricted to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 13 The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in its consideration of this planning application, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy

Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 14 Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.