

**Mereworth (Mereworth)**  
East & West Peckham  
Mereworth And Wbury

**17<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

**TM/25/01173/PA**

**Location:** Land at junction of Mereworth Road and Seven Mile Lane Mereworth Maidstone

**Proposal:** Advertisement Consent (Retrospective): For 1 x post mounted advertising board

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## **1. Description of Proposal:**

- 1.1 The proposal seeks retrospective consent for the erection of a post-mounted advertisement board.
- 1.2 The signage is supported by two steel poles, each measuring approximately 1m below ground and 3.8m above ground, meaning the overall height is 4.8m and the total height above ground is 3.8m. The poles have an approximate diameter of 75mm. The sign itself comprises two aluminium composite panels ("Alupanel"), fixed to the poles by horizontal metal rails attached to the rear of the panels and clamped to the poles. Each panel measures approximately 1.2m in height, 2.25m in width, and 0.15m in depth.
- 1.3 The sign has a navy background with white lettering. It displays the name of the vineyard, "*Yotes Court Vineyard*," above three coloured circles which reflect the branding of the vineyard's wines. Within the circles, the text reads "*Wine Bar*," "*Shop*," and "*1 Mile*." An arrow is also included to indicate the direction of travel for vehicles and pedestrians towards the vineyard.

## **2. Reason for reporting to Committee:**

- 2.1 The application has been called in to committee by Cllr Matt Boughton due to concerns regarding visual amenity.

## **3. The Site:**

- 3.1 The site is a field located on the junction between Seven Mile Lane and Mereworth Road. The site is screened from the public highway by established hedgerow.
- 3.2 It is outside of any defined settlement boundary and within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 3.3 It is adjacent to, but lies outside of, the Yotes Court Conservation Area.

**4. Planning History (relevant):**

No planning history.

**5. Consultees:**

5.1 West Peckham Parish Council: No objection.

5.2 Mereworth Parish Council: Object to the signage – this is an accident hot spot (crashmap.co.uk) and is close to a school, therefore the junction should have minimal distractions for drivers. The sign should be moved on safety grounds. It could be located away from its current location.

5.3 KCC Highways: I have no objection in principle to the development. Whilst Seven Mile Lane in general has historically had a poor collision record, I am not aware of this location being a current crash cluster site. Although I can appreciate the local concern, the sign is static and not electronic meaning that the image will remain constant thereby significantly limiting the risk of driver distraction. As a point of detail, the sign should be located at least 2.4 meters back from the edge of the highway/junction of Seven Mile Lane to make sure that it does not obstruct visibility from it. The submitted drawing is of poor detail and unscaled so it is unclear how far back the sign would be located in practice.

5.4 Public Representations: One objection for the following reasons:

- Impact on Green Belt
- Design
- Highway safety

Please note that the objector also raised concerns regarding the signage setting a future precedent and the potential for delivery drivers to become confused by the signage and miss their property. These matters are not material planning considerations and therefore cannot be taken into account in the assessment of this application.

5.5 For clarity, applications for advertisement consent are assessed solely in relation to their impact on visual amenity and highway safety. Whilst it is relevant to consider the effect of the signage on the character of the countryside and its setting within the Green Belt, it is not appropriate to assess the proposal against paragraph 154 of the NPPF in respect of inappropriate development.

**6. Determining Issues:**

6.1 Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process

within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account cumulative impacts.

- 6.2 The NPPG states that advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment and cumulative impacts must be taken into account. The NPPG also states that the location, colour, design or method of illumination of advertisement needs to be assessed in terms of the safety of road, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome users.

#### Visual Amenity

- 6.3 The applicant has explained that the purpose of the signage is to provide clear directions to the vineyard. The proposed scale and siting of the sign are considered to respond to this purpose, ensuring it is readily visible to motorists travelling along the highway. Whilst a smaller sign might appear less visually intrusive, it would not achieve the same functional outcome. The sign has been designed to extend above the established hedgerows along the northern and eastern site boundaries to remain effective as a directional feature.
- 6.4 As set out earlier in this report, applications for advertisement consent are not assessed against paragraph 154 of the NPPF in relation to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to consider the impact of the proposal on the character of the countryside and the setting of the Green Belt. The NPPF states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence, with openness having both a spatial and visual dimension.
- 6.5 The site consists of a largely undeveloped field of rural, agricultural character, enclosed from the public highway by established hedgerow. However, the presence of electricity pylons and highway directional signage at the corner, forward of the hedgerow, means the landscape is not entirely unspoilt or free from man-made features. Additional directional signs are also present in the wider area along The Street and Seven Mile Lane. In this context, the introduction of a directional sign is not considered to be out of character and would remain visually contained by the existing hedgerow. In views from the highway, the level of enclosure means the visual openness of the Green Belt would not be significantly harmed. Although the sign is visible from the road—as is necessary to fulfil its directional function—its impact is softened by the hedgerow, particularly during the spring and summer months when vegetation is denser.
- 6.6 From a spatial perspective, the signage would occupy a very limited area in the north-eastern corner of the field and would not extend built form across the site. Given its scale relative to the wider field and the open countryside setting, it is not considered to materially erode the spatial openness of the Green Belt.

- 6.7 The colour palette of the signage is restrained and not visually garish, and the sign is not proposed to be illuminated. Signage of this nature is not unusual in a rural context, where mobile signal can be poor and reliance on physical wayfinding is greater. The proposed aluminium composite panels are similar in materiality to directional road signage, which is already a common feature in the locality given the site's position at the junction of two classified roads. Furthermore, the site is not within a designated National Landscape (formerly AONB), where sensitivity to visual change would be greater.
- 6.8 In summary, the signage is of a restrained design, using muted colours and non-illuminated panels, and is positioned on a corner that incorporates hedging and highway directional signage. Although visible from the public highway, its overall impact is not considered to result in material harm to the character of the countryside or the visual amenity of the Green Belt setting.

#### Highway Safety

- 6.9 The proposed signage would be positioned at the corner of the junction between Seven Mile Lane and Mereworth Road.
- 6.10 Kent County Council Highways have been consulted and raise no objection on highway safety grounds. They advised, however, that the sign should be set back at least 2.4 metres from the edge of the junction with Seven Mile Lane to ensure it does not obstruct visibility. They also noted that the submitted plans were not to scale, meaning this distance could not be verified.
- 6.11 However, the applicant has submitted a scaled block plan with the location of the signage. Measurements taken from this plan confirm that the signage would be set back a minimum of 2.4 metres from the highway.
- 6.12 Moreover, placing the signage above the hedge helps prevent confusion for drivers reading the lower directional signs. If it were positioned at the same level as the directional signage, it could create a greater hazard by causing uncertainty for road users.
- 6.13 On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

#### **7. Conclusion:**

- 7.1 Taking all matters into account that are relevant to the determination under the advertisement regulations, the proposed advertisement is considered to achieve its functional purpose without giving rise to unacceptable harm to visual amenity, highway safety, or the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst the sign is relatively tall, its siting, scale, and non-illuminated design ensure the impact is limited and appropriate within its rural context.

- 7.2 Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy, providing income, employment, and leisure opportunities. By facilitating wayfinding to the vineyard, the signage would support a local rural business and, in turn, contribute positively to the local economy. The proposal is therefore judged to be acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

**8. Recommendation:**

**8.1 Approve**, subject to the following:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Detail Signage Drawing  
Scaled Block Plan  
Location Plan

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approval and to ensure the quality of development indicated on the approved plans is achieved in practice.

2. This consent shall expire at the end of a period of five years from the date of consent.

Reason: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

3. 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.

Reason: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

4. 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.

Reason: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

5. 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: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

6. 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.

Reason: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

7. Where any 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: In pursuance of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

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