

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 02 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/Z/16/3156605

Unit 1-2 Easton Lane, Winchester SO23 7RU

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Wickes Building Supplies against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01122/AVC, dated 18 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1no. internally illuminated fascia sign and illuminated Wickes lettering on the existing free standing totem sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and consent for 1no. internally illuminated fascia sign and illuminated Wickes lettering on the existing free standing totem sign is granted. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the conditions set out in the Regulations and to the additional conditions below:
 - 1) The intensity of the illumination of the signs permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300cd/m.
 - 2) The signs permitted by this consent shall not be illuminated except (i) between 07:00 and 20:00 hours Monday to Saturday, (ii) between 10:00 and 16:00 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Procedural Matters

2. The signs are in situ and are in accordance with the submitted plans. The appellant refers to a proposal to remove the white frame from the free standing sign. However, I have not been provided with a drawing which indicates these changes. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans. The agent has confirmed that the planning application and appeal are made in the name of Wickes Building Supplies and that Travis Perkins (Properties) Limited referred to in the planning application form is the parent company.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the character and appearance of the area.
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Reasons

4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Highways Authority does object in terms of highway safety.
5. The area in which the appeal site is located has commercial and industrial uses and is fairly large in scale. Easton Lane is a busy road and the site is close to the M3/A34 junction. Advertising in the area is prevalent and includes a wide range of signs. A small number of these are illuminated although I note that some have down-lighters rather than internal sources of illumination. The appeal site is part of a commercial estate with access off Easton Lane.
6. The fascia sign is large and positioned over the front entrance to the store which faces south towards the car park and another commercial unit. Although the building is located near the brow of a hill the fascia sign does not become visible from both directions until quite close to the entrance to the estate. Signs and other street furniture also obscure this view somewhat. I note that there are houses and blocks of flats to the south along Winnall Manor Road. However, the fascia sign is at some distance from the nearest dwellings and it would be seen in the context of street lights and other sources of light within the area including the adjoining flats.
7. The free standing sign is positioned so that it provides a clear indication of the location of the store. This sign would also be seen against the backdrop and foreground of other signs at the entrance to the estate. The illuminated area is limited to the top of the sign and is close to a number of street lights. I consider it does not have an overly dominant presence in the street scene. I conclude that the internally illuminated fascia sign and illuminated Wickes lettering on the existing free standing totem sign would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
8. I have considered the Council's argument that the grant of consent could set a precedent for similar proposals. However, no directly comparable sites to which this might apply were put forward. Each application and appeal must be determined on its individual merits and a generalised concern of this nature does not justify withholding consent in this case.
9. I have taken account saved Policy HE11 of the Winchester Local Plan Review 2006 which amongst other things seeks to protect visual amenity and so is material in this case. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would not cause harm to visual amenity, the proposal does not conflict with this policy.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposed advertisements would not be detrimental to visual amenity. I shall therefore allow the appeal subject to the five standard conditions, together with additional conditions limiting the illumination of the signs to normal store opening hours and a limit on the level of illumination in order to safeguard visual amenity.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR