
Appeal Decision

Site visit carried out on 4 January 2017

by Mrs J A Vyse DipTP DipPBM MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U2805/Z/16/3155864

Unit 1, 291 Rockingham Road, Corby NN17 2AE

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Galbraith of Inschool Media Limited against the decision of Corby Borough Council.
 - The application, No 16/00180/ADV, dated 6 May 2016, was refused by a notice dated 20 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is described on the application form as an 11ft 6" x 21ft sign board – not illuminated.
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Decision

1. For the reasons that follow, the appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Notwithstanding the measurements set out in the header above, the planning officer's report refers to dimensions of 3.348 metres x 6.396 metres x 0.3 metres, with the freestanding sign to be set above the ground by 0.914 metres. Whilst those figures do not appear to correlate with either the imperial or metric measurements referred to at various places on the application form, they do reflect the annotated measurements on application plan No 266-01. I note, in this regard, that part E of the appeal form (Description of Advertisement) does not repeat the description set out on the application form, but instead references the submitted plans. I confirm, therefore, that I have dealt with this appeal on the same basis as did the Council and thus my decision is based on the signboard as annotated on plan No 266-01.
3. The submitted plans also show a freestanding signboard adjacent to the location of that proposed. However, whilst there is already a signboard on the site, it is not in the position shown on the submitted plans. The Council confirms, in this regard, that whilst a signboard on the site was approved in February 2016,¹ it has not been erected on the approved alignment. The signboard proposed would be in addition to that already approved.
4. In refusing the application, the Council refers to conflict with policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 which, among other things, seeks to ensure that development respects and enhances local character. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements require decisions to be made only in the interests of amenity (and, where

¹ Application No 15/00477/ADV

applicable, public safety) taking into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material, and other relevant factors. That is reflected at paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). On that basis, the Council's policies alone cannot be decisive. I am mindful, however, that with regard to considerations affecting amenity, the Government's Planning Practice Guidance states that local planning authorities will always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, and whether the advertisement is in scale and in keeping with these features.²

Reasons

5. There is no suggestion that the proposed sign board would have an adverse impact on highway safety. The main issue in this case, therefore, relates to the effect of the proposed display on the amenity of the area.
6. The proposed sign board would be located at the western end of a finger of land that extends alongside Rockingham Road, away from the existing building cluster located at the eastern end of the road frontage. This finger of land, which is enclosed by metal palisade fencing along the back of the footway, appears to be unused at present and is generally overgrown with self seeded vegetation.
7. The sign board would be sited adjacent to the approved/existing sign, close to the highway, and would face onto the adjacent roundabout junction, a junction where the A6116 joins Rockingham Way on the northern edge of Corby. When seen in conjunction with the existing/approved signboard, I am in no doubt that the resultant display would dominate the street scene here. As a result of its large size and prominent elevated position, I consider that the proposed signboard would appear as an unduly dominant and assertive feature in the street scene. It would amount to visual clutter, giving an overall impression of excessive advertising in a prominent location, which would be detrimental to interests of visual amenity. There would be conflict, in this regard with the development plan policy referred to by the Council, and the Framework.
8. I saw a number of other signs in the vicinity and recognise that this is a semi-commercial area. However, other than the existing signboard on the appeal site, these tended to be smaller and far more low key than that proposed. I am also referred by the appellant to a large sign board by a speedway track elsewhere in the Borough, which I understand to be unauthorised but against which the Council has taken no action. I have no detailed information about any of the other signs but, in any event, as decision maker, I am not bound by existing situations where advertisements are considered harmful, or where (as is my view in this case) a proposed advertisement would be harmful to the amenity of the area. That other signage does not, therefore, tell in favour of the appeal scheme.
9. Accordingly, for the reasons set out above, I conclude on balance that the appeal should not succeed.

Jennifer A Vyse
INSPECTOR

² Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306