

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2017

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/Z/16/3164968

Lidl, Bridge Road, Litherland L21 6PD

- 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 Miss Bethany Clark of Lidl UK GmbH against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2016/01250, dated 24 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is 2 x hoarded 48 sheet billboards.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The advertisement proposed on the application form is set out above. Even so the Council consulted and considered a total of four hoarded 48 sheet billboards, with two on the front elevation of the supermarket and two on the rear elevation facing Wellington Road. I also understand that the Council granted advertisement consent on a separate decision notice, under the same reference, concerning the two 48 sheet billboards on the front elevation.
3. As the evidence suggested the application was considered on the basis of the four 48 sheet billboards, I asked the parties to agree the scope of the advertisement proposed. They describe it as "*Advertisement Consent for the display of two 48 sheet billboards signs at the front and two 48 sheet billboards signs at the rear of the premises*". I concur with this, however, as it is clear from the evidence that the advertisements at the rear of premise form the basis of the Council's reason for refusal, my findings are focussed on these.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a supermarket which is set back from Bridge Road and off the Princess Way roundabout. A car park linked to the supermarket is to the front and side of the store building. Wellington Road bounds the south western elevation of the supermarket before wrapping around the rear elevation. Wellington Road provides dedicated vehicular and pedestrian access routes to residential dwellings off Palmerston Avenue and Hapsford Road Recreation Park which extends alongside the elevated Liverpool to Southport railway line. The
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railway line is on a vegetated embankment, while opposite the supermarket's south western elevation is the Sefton and Litherland railway station.

6. The local environment contains a mixture of residential, recreation and commercial uses. In terms of the supermarket site itself, there is a totem advertisement adjacent to the roundabout and various advertisements on the store building. These include two 48 sheet billboards on the north eastern elevation and a smaller advertisement facing Bridge Road. There are no advertisements on the south western elevation or on Wellington Road itself, apart from road signs on street lighting columns. These are much smaller than the billboards and they are linked to the functional use of the highway.
7. The proposed billboards would be viewed by passing motorists and pedestrians from Wellington Road and by users of the railway whilst waiting on the platform for trains to arrive. This includes the large sheltered seating area. In addition both advertisements would be viewed by passengers on trains passing through or stopping at the station.
8. The two billboards would be of a standard size and construction, and I appreciate they would only be observed on an oblique angle from Bridge Road. However they would be very apparent to passers-by on Wellington Road and to railway users due to their position and scale together with the large gap in the vegetation on the embankment. I consider that they would be a dominant feature which would be out of keeping with the character of the nearby area. While they would be separated, legible and subordinate to the building, their size would increase the awareness of passing motorists, pedestrians and railway users of their presence. Furthermore I do not consider that they would be viewed in context with other advertisements related to the supermarket and to those on Bridge Road or near to the Princess Way roundabout. As a result I do not consider that they would improve the visual amenity of the area.
9. The billboards would be behind an existing fence and away from the highway. Thus, I concur with the Council that public safety would not be affected.
10. I have also taken into account paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which explains that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Furthermore I have also had regard to Policy MD7 of the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Policy EQ11 of the emerging A Local Plan for Sefton (Local Plan) which together seek to protect amenity and so they are material in this case. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the surrounding area and as such, the proposal conflicts with UDP Policy MD7, Local Plan Policy EQ11 and paragraph 67 of the Framework.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR