
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/Z/16/3165028

R Costings Abbey Stadium, 530 Newmarket Road, CAMBRIDGE, CB5 8LN

- 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 Cambridge United Football Club against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref. 16/1404/ADV, dated 28 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is described on the appeal form as 'Digital display boards at the front of the stadium on Newmarket Road. These digital display boards will display match day information, static electronic advertising and club promotions'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises the stadium for Cambridge United Football Club, which is located on the busy Newmarket Road, which at this point comprises a mix of commercial and residential property. The forecourt to the football ground contains a mix of advertising displays, including poster panels. Adverts are attached to the front boundary wall, and there is a central 'V' board which displays match and club information and additional adverts. It is this display which would be replaced.
4. Although the area has an urban and commercial appearance, in the vicinity there are a number of listed buildings¹ which are within the adjacent Riverside and Stourbridge Common area of the Central Conservation Area. To the west of the appeal site is Coldham's Common, which combined with Stourbridge Common act as green 'breaks' in the otherwise urban setting. The site is also within an Area of Special Control of Advertisements.
5. The appellant agrees with the Council's assessment that the current site has poor visual amenity and is detrimental to the street scene. However, whilst I note the appellant's view that the proposed advertising board would look more professional than the display to be replaced, its size and illumination would

¹ On the opposite side of Newmarket Road are the listed buildings of the Chapel of St Mary Magdalene (Stourbridge Chapel), The Round House, Papermills, and The Globe Public House (now the Pipasha restaurant).

nevertheless form part of the visual clutter across the forecourt of the appeal site. Although the application form indicates that the replacement display would be smaller than the existing, it would not reduce the perceived amount of advertising across the site. Moreover, compared to the boards to be replaced, the inclusion of illumination and the digital display would increase the visual impact of the signage at the site and in the street scene. There are externally illuminated signs on business premises in the vicinity, but none appear to be of the scale or form of illumination proposed, and would have a more discreet presence.

6. The appeal site is opposite a conservation area and there are listed buildings nearby. In exercising planning functions, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Whilst the setting of the nearby listed buildings and conservation area is somewhat compromised by the urban context of this part of Newmarket Road, the illuminated signage would be a further intrusion that would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and would detract from the setting of the closest listed buildings. Although I note that the signage would not directly face the Commons², it would be an intrusive feature that would adversely impact upon the landscape of these areas.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment, and this is reflected in the aims of Policies 3/15, 4/10 and 4/11 of the Cambridge City Local Plan 2006 in so far as they relate to matters of amenity. As the powers to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, the development plan policies have not been decisive, but I have had regard to them as material considerations in this appeal. However, the 'Cambridge Shopfront Design Guide: November 1997'³ does not appear relevant to the proposal, as it does not address freestanding forecourt signage of the nature proposed in this appeal.
8. Whilst I have taken into account the likely benefits of the proposal to the Club, on the basis of the information supplied the resultant adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would be detrimental to amenity and that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

² Coldham's Common and Stourbridge Common

³ Dated in error as 2003 in the Council's decision notice