

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2017

by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/Z/17/3169291

Land adjacent to Enfield Retail Park, Crown Road, Enfield EN1 1TH

- 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 ALDI Stores Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref 16/05329/ADV, dated 18 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 January 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1 x H illuminated totem sign with one signcase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed totem sign on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) confirms that the issues of amenity and, where applicable, public safety, are the determining factors in advertisement appeals. The Regulations state that development plan policies alone cannot be decisive when determining cases such as this one. Nevertheless, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹ advises that in assessing the effect on amenity, factors such as historic, architectural or cultural features in the neighbourhood can be taken into consideration. I have therefore had regard to the Council's policies alongside the advice and guidance of the Framework and the PPG as material considerations in reaching my decision.
4. The existing ALDI store is sited within a larger purpose-built retail park accessed from a signalised junction on the A10 (Great Cambridge Road). This section of the A10 is a straight, dual carriageway alongside which is a wide footway/cycleway and regularly spaced street lights, interspersed with occasional street trees. Although there are commercial activities on the eastern side of the road many of these sites are enclosed by hedges and all the signage appears to be on private land. A low hedge within the retail park provides visual separation between the A10, its associated footway/cycleway and the car park that serves the retail area. This combination of factors gives the immediately surrounding street scene an uncluttered appearance.

¹ Paragraph 079 Reference ID: 18b-79-20140306

5. The only existing free-standing sign advertising the retail units is located within the park and is shared by its various occupants. Regardless of the location of any particular store within the park, all the units have small signs of equal size set into one larger combined totem.
6. The unit occupied by ALDI is sited towards the rear of the park and is not highly visible from the roadside. The existing small sign within the shared display is of limited prominence, restricting its ability to draw attention of customers to the presence of ALDI within the park. The proposal seeks to display a larger sign on land adjacent to the retail park, with permission from the landowner. It would be mounted on a 5m high totem and the size of the sign face would be 1.2m wide by 1.9m high.
7. The proposed sign would be sited on land that would be unrelated to the shop unit on a site that is enclosed by a mature hedge. If any of this vegetation was to be removed in order to increase the visibility of the proposed sign, it would adversely affect the appearance of this adjoining site, whose current activities are well screened. There are large signs for Next and Costa on the adjacent site, but these are attached to the building from which they operate. Similarly, all the other free-standing advertisements that were brought to my attention, including those at McDonalds, Krispy Kreme and Sainsbury's were within the sites of the businesses to which were related. None of these are therefore directly comparable with the appeal scheme.
8. ALDI wishes to increase awareness of its presence within the retail park in order to attract more potential customers. However, the existing approach to the area is an attractive, uncluttered appearance softened by the presence of trees and other vegetation. Within the retail park, the signage appears to be restricted to the individual buildings to which the signs refer. This ensures that there is a holistic approach to advertising throughout the park and that area as a whole retains a neat and orderly appearance. Consequently no individual occupiers of advertisements becoming visually dominant.
9. In this context the introduction of an individual sign outside the retail park on a site that is some distance from, and unrelated to, the ALDI store would introduce unjustified visual clutter that would be detrimental to the street scene.
10. The Council has cited Policies CP30 of The Enfield Plan: Core Strategy and Policy DMD41 of its Development Management Document in its reason for refusal. I have had regard to the requirements of these local policies, but in view of the Regulations, they have not been decisive in coming to my decision.

Conclusion

11. For the reason set out above, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR