
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2017

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H4315/Z/17/3170929
163 College Street, St Helens, WA10 1TY

- 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 Mr Sarwar Younis against the decision of St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2016/0901/ADC, dated 5 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is consent to display 6 No signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The original planning application proposed a number of advertisements. The Council issued a split decision that granted consent for some of these, but refused permission for a large banner sign (6.3m by 1.2m) on the north eastern elevation of 161 College Street. My Decision relates solely to the advertisement that was refused permission by the Council.
3. The large banner sign on the north eastern elevation of 161 College Street has already been erected, and the appeal is therefore retrospective in nature.
4. The description of development given above is taken from the Council's Decision Notice. This is because the description given on the planning application form states that the proposal is for a change of use (rather than advertisement consent) which is inaccurate.
5. The Council has drawn my attention to the policies they consider to be relevant to this appeal and I have taken them into account as a material consideration. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. In my determination of this appeal, the Council's policies have not therefore, by themselves, been decisive.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal sign is located in a prominent position, facing in a north eastern direction along College Street. It is located beneath a large billboard sign that is not associated with the car wash business, and above 2 smaller signs that are associated with the business.
8. The appeal sign fills the gap between the adverts located above and below it. It effectively creates a continuous block of signage on the north eastern elevation of 161 College Street that extends from just above ground level to the eaves of the building. This diminishes the separate identity of the respective signs and creates a large block of advertising that appears visually cluttered and intrusive. This is an unattractive feature in the street in what is a relatively prominent location.
9. The appellant states that the appeal sign is necessary in order to attract new customers to the business. However, I note that the premises are already well served by a number of existing signs on the College Street frontage. These already provide clear and prominent signage to the business. Whilst the appeal sign would provide some additional benefit in this regard, that does not outweigh the harm I have identified above.
10. I conclude that the development is unacceptably harmful to the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account Policy CP1 of the St Helens Core Strategy (2012) and retained policy GEN10 of the St Helens UDP (1998) which seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal is harmful to amenity, the proposal also conflicts with these policies.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement is detrimental to the interests of amenity.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR