
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2017

by **David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 7th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/Z/17/3177449

Wickes Building Supplies Ltd, London Road, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9SR

- 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 Travis Perkins PLC against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 4/00126/17/ADV, dated 19 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2017.
 - The advertisement is a replacement internally illuminated double sided totem sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of a replacement internally illuminated double sided totem sign as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Procedural Matter

2. The replacement totem sign has already been erected along with the other signs shown on the submitted drawings. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the signage shown on the submitted drawings. This is consistent with what is described on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the totem sign on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a Wickes retail warehouse set back within a small commercial area with a number of other retail warehouses that front onto the busy A4251 London Road. There are fascia signs on the buildings and some small free standing totem signs on the frontage close to the road. There is some street furniture including lamp posts, utility cabinets, pedestrian crossings and traffic lights at the entrance to the commercial area.
5. The surrounding area is mixed in character with residential flats and a public house on the opposite side of the road. To the north-west is a parade of shops each of which has fascia signs and projecting signs and to the south is a petrol filling station with signage on the canopy and a substantial totem sign alongside the road. There is, therefore, a significant amount of signage in the area, some of which is illuminated.

6. The replacement internally illuminated double sided totem sign is located on the road frontage at the entrance to the commercial area. It is situated in the same position as the existing totem sign within a grassed area in front of the adjacent Dunelm retail warehouse. The replacement totem sign has a height of about 6.5m and contains a double sided area of white text on a coloured corporate background with lettering and the logos internally illuminated only.
7. Whilst the totem sign is located in a prominent position on the site frontage close to the main road and the removal of the existing vegetation nearby increases its visibility, in my view, I consider that it does not look out of place or over large when compared against the existing totem sign and the totem sign at the petrol filling station nearby. Its physical separation from the other signs helps avoid any unacceptable cumulative effect. The internal illumination of the totem sign appears to be reasonably restrained and is acceptable, particularly given that there are other illuminated signs in the area.
8. Overall the signage does not strike me as being excessive and does not appear out of place in relation to its surroundings. Accordingly, I am satisfied it does not have an unacceptable cumulative effect nor result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the adjacent residential properties and the area.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the replacement totem sign does not result in significant adverse harm to the area's amenity. The Council's decision refers to Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy 2013 (CS) and Saved Policy 112 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (LP). CS Policy CS12 requires high quality site design that avoids visual intrusion to the surrounding properties and integrates with the streetscape character. More specifically, LP Saved Policy 112 sets out that, amongst other things, advertisement shall be sympathetic in size, appearance, design and position to the building or site on which it is displayed, is not unduly prominent and does not detract from the amenity and character of the surrounding area. The cumulative effect of advertisements on their surroundings will also be taken into account.
10. However, the Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Consequently, although I have taken into account those policies, which are material, and I conclude that the scheme would not conflict with them, they have not been a decisive consideration in my decision. As the proposal would not have a negative impact on the local environment, it would not conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. The Council has requested the Regulations standard conditions and a condition to control the intensity of illumination. In this case the design of the lighting is shown on the submitted drawings and the level of illumination is specified on the application form. There is no evidence to indicate that the totem sign would cause highway safety or amenity problems for neighbours. A non-standard condition relating to the intensity of illumination is therefore unnecessary.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR