
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip (Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 19 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/Z/17/3180555

Footasylum, The Core Shopping Centre, Leeds Core, Lands Lane, Leeds LS1 6AW

- 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 Footasylum against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 17/02881/ADV, dated 3 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2017.
 - The advertisement is 1 No. set of internally illuminated letters, logo and underline.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. When I visited the site the sign was in situ and I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the advertisement has on visual amenity.

Reasons

4. The sign is situated on a large commercial building, with a contemporary appearance, located on a vibrant shopping street. The fully glazed shop fronts at ground floor level and features on upper levels above are contained in a distinctive grid of metal elements which break the facade up into a series of distinct horizontal elements and the shopfront glazing is framed by this metalwork. The building's design and features contribute to it making a positive contribution to the streetscene. The sign is located on the outside of two glass shopfronts and is positioned so that it cuts across one of the vertical framing members.
5. Whilst the corporate nature of the sign itself is not necessarily out of place in its commercial location, its positioning on the building appears at odds with other signs in the same frontage which are situated within the grid formed by the metal elements. The result is one which appears particularly conspicuous and incongruous in the context of the host building's design, appearance and architectural features and within the streetscene. This discordant effect is emphasised as a result of its size and the distinct angle at which it is set. The visual amenity of the area has been harmed as a result.

6. This harm to visual amenity includes that of the Leeds City Centre Conservation Area in which the site is located, the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of which is a matter I have paid special attention to. I am conscious that the National Planning Policy Framework points out that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment.
7. I have taken into account Core Strategy¹ Policies P10 and P11 and saved UDP² Policies GP5 and BD8, the latter of which requires signs to be sensitively located within the streetscene and carefully related to the character, scale and architectural features of the host building. These policies are material insofar as they relate to amenity and given that I have concluded that the scheme harms amenity, the advertisement conflicts with these policies.
8. Whilst the shop it serves occupies a number of distinct bays in the building's frontage, any advantages the sign may have in visually linking two shopfronts or reducing the overall number of signs is outweighed by its adverse effects. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of other shop signs in the vicinity. However, on the basis of their photographs and my observations, none of these are positioned in the same manner as the appeal sign in relation to their host buildings' design. Although the appellant's expansion into previously vacant units will have had some benefit to the shopping area, there is no indication that such a benefit could only have been achieved by way of the sign's particular configuration. These matters do not, therefore, lead me to consider that the sign is acceptable.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, the advertisement harms the visual amenity of the area and the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Leeds Core Strategy, 2014.

² Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006).