
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 March 2018

by R J Jackson BA MPhil DMS MRTPI MCMi

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 April 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/Z/18/3192806

Gala Bingo, Lansdowne House, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH1 3JP

- 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 Lee Whalley, Frodsham Sign and Display Ltd against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2017-163-AJ, dated 6 November 2017, was refused by notice dated 2 January 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is three upper level roundel signs.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the three upper level roundel signs 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 Regulations and the following additional condition:-
 - 1) Before the advertisements hereby consented are first displayed, the existing individual letters on the fin on the front elevation of the building shall be permanently removed and the underlying structure made good in materials to match the existing section of the building.

Procedural matters

2. The original application also applied for a number of signs at ground floor level. These were granted express advertisement consent by the Council and I say no more about them.
3. The decision notice refused consent for "2 x upper level roundel signs". However, there are three such signs shown on the drawings, one on each side of the main fin at the top of the building and a third on the central section between the third and fourth floors. The main parties were asked for clarification on this. It was confirmed by the Council that it objected to all three signs. It appears that the "2" was a typographical error and I have therefore dealt with this appeal as being against a refusal for three signs and I have used that description in the heading.
4. Amended plans were submitted by the then applicant during the consideration of the appeal by the Council and these were the signs refused by the Council. My decision also uses these amended plans.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect on the visual amenities of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site lies in the centre of a long brick finished building set back from Christchurch Road with "islands" between the main road and the service road in front of the building. There are two pine trees on each of these islands.
7. The overall building is five storeys in height, with the ground floor being retail or similar uses with fascia signs, then a long horizontal strip creating a canopy and four floors of accommodation above. The horizontal nature of the overall building is broken up by a taller central section with a "fin" extending to the front and above this central section.
8. Originally a cinema, the building has a significant presence in the street scene and the top of the fin can be seen in long distance views from some way away. However, medium distance views of the appeal building along Christchurch Road are obscured by the pine trees, and fin is only seen from short distance views by somebody positively looking up as it is so far above eye-line. The Council indicates that the building is a non designated heritage asset although I have not been advised of the provenance of that notation.
9. Currently there are roundel signs on either side of the fin and a third on the central section between third and fourth floors. All of these have slightly raised lettering. In addition, affixed on either side of the fin, are two series of five signs on each side spelling out "BINGO".
10. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that in weighing applications that affect non designated assets a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. While the building is clearly of its period, I have not been advised why the building is notated as a non designated heritage asset and therefore I have assessed its significance on the basis of its presence in the street scene. There is nothing about the building which indicates that any signage should be in a particularly architectural style.
11. The fin marks out the building in the street scene, and was designed to act as some sort of "marker". At the distance which the proposed advertisements on the fin could be viewed, given that they would not be easily seen in either short or medium distance views, the nature of the materials would not be perceptible. The modern nature of the design of the advertisements, while different, would not be out of keeping with the architecture of the building. The removal of the individual letters would give the fin a "cleaner" and more appropriate appearance.
12. As to the sign on the front elevation, while this could be more readily seen from closer to the building, it would fit with the architectural composition of the building and would not be harmful to amenity.
13. I have taken into account Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy which seeks to provide a high standard of amenity and so is material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would not harm amenity, the proposal does not conflict with this policy.

Conditions

14. I have considered the need for conditions against the requirements of the national Planning Practice Guidance and the Framework.
15. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 impose the five standard conditions. In addition, in order to obtain the benefit to visual amenity of the loss of the ten individual letters on the fin these need to be removed before the display of the appeal signs takes place.

Conclusions

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisements would not be detrimental to the interests of amenity.

RJ Jackson

INSPECTOR