



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2019

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th July 2019.

Appeal Ref: APP/P3420/Z/19/3224328

Robert Coates Plant Sales Ltd, Congleton Road, Butt Lane, Kidsgrove ST7 1LP

- 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 Commercial Developments Projects Limited against the decision of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00987/ADV, dated 13 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 6 February 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as - 'The sign will be 5m in height, have a width of 1.6m and a depth of 0.3m. The white element of the sign will be internally illuminated whilst the far larger red section will not be illuminated. Constructed from steel, aluminium, and hardwood'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for the erection of the freestanding, 5m double sided monument sign to the east of the main building as detailed on drawing ref. 5m monument sign as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the 5 standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations.

Procedural Matters

2. The application for express consent included a range of other proposed signage to which the Council did not object. The Council issued a split decision granting consent for those signs but refusing it for a monument sign. This is reflected in the description I have used in the heading above and my decision therefore deals only with the monument sign. I have taken this description from Section E of the appellant's appeal form in the heading but in the interests of clarity I have used the Council's more succinct description in my formal decision.
3. During the processing of the application, revisions were submitted by the appellant to amend the original '8m totem sign' which formed part of the range of signage seeking express consent.
4. The amended elevation drawing under consideration and that which formed the basis of the Council's refusal is titled '5m Monument Sign'. It is this drawing I have based my decision on. However, the corresponding 'Proposed Site Layout – Signage' drawing (ref: 15008-11) refers to the sign as a 'totem pole sign' not a 'monument sign'. Although there is an inconsistency in the terminology used, the Appellant and Council's cases make no suggestion that the monument sign is located differently to that shown on the site plan and annotated as 'totem

pole sign'. For the avoidance of doubt, I have taken the terms totem and monument signs to be the same sign for the purposes of my decision and have taken its location from drawing ref 15008-11.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site has planning permission for the construction of an A1/A3 unit ('the approved building'), but currently is used to store plant machinery. It is located adjacent to a light controlled intersection where there are other commercial uses in close proximity. These include a car repairs premises, which comprises a forecourt area and a detached building set back from the highway. That premises has a large totem sign on the forecourt and a banner sign on the fascia of the building, each displaying the company name and logo and services offered. On the opposite side of the road to the appeal site is a large free-standing restaurant. The company signage is displayed on the building, while a totem sign is positioned in the car park area to the front of the building. A car sales business is located next to the restaurant. A large open roof canopy displays the company's branding at fascia level.
7. The proposed sign will be erected on the landscaped strip in front of the approved building where it faces Newcastle Road. Although visible from surrounding roads it will be seen against the backdrop of the approved building and not appear over prominent in this context. Moreover, there are signs of similar scale sited on the forecourt areas of adjacent commercial uses, and the proposal will be seen in this setting without appearing intrusive or harmful to the character of the area. I also find the design of the sign acceptable and consistent with the branding and colour used for the approved building.
8. My attention has been drawn to the other signage permitted on the approved building, which the Council states provides adequate branding that would be seen above the boundary treatment for the site and from the surrounding highways. Nevertheless, I consider that the height and positioning of the totem sign would give advance warning to motorists approaching from Newcastle Road and Linley Road, where long distance views of the approved building would be partially obscured by landscaping and a free-standing advertisement hoarding.
9. I conclude therefore that the proposed sign would not harm the amenity of the area. I have taken into account Policy CSP1 of the Newcastle Under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026, Adopted October 2009, which seeks to protect the character of the area 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. I also find no conflict with Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework which refers to the effect poorly sited and designed advertisements can have on the quality and character of places.

10. The appeal is therefore allowed, and express consent should be granted, subject to standard conditions.

R. E. Jones

INSPECTOR