
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2019

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/Z/19/3222757

Sainsbury's Supermarket, 24 Meeting House Lane, Ringwood BH24 1EY

- 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 Sainsbury's Supermarket Limited against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/11349, dated 1 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 2x replacement welcome wall panel signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 2x replacement welcome wall panel 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.

Procedural Matters

2. The advertisements in question have already been installed. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis of the advertisements as they exist.

Main Issue

3. Consideration of advertisements is limited to matters of amenity and public safety. The Council has raised no objections related to public safety. The main issue is therefore the effect of the advertisements on amenity, with particular regard to whether they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Ringwood Conservation Area (the Conservation Area), and their effect on the setting of the adjacent Meeting House, which is a listed building.

Reasons

4. The site is located within the Conservation Area. The designation covers a large proportion of the town centre and some adjacent development. As such the significance of the Conservation Area partly resides in the historic layout of the town, evidence for its historic pattern of development, and the historic spaces and buildings it contains. The latter includes the Grade II* listed, early eighteenth century Meeting House, which stands adjacent to the site, and is a visually important feature of the street scene.
5. The advertisements have been attached to a supermarket building of appreciably 1980s date and appearance. It is apparent that the building makes

- little or no contribution to the special historic or architectural character or appearance of the Conservation Area, or indeed to its significance.
6. The supermarket extends around 2 sides of the Meeting House, incorporating a partially covered area to its rear. This features a number of small modern shops, linked to the High Street via Pedlar's Walk. One of the advertisements is located on the west elevation of the supermarket, within part of the covered area; the other is attached to the north elevation of the supermarket, which faces onto Meeting House Lane.
 7. The advertisement on the west elevation is larger than an existing sequence of wall panels featuring signage and an ATM on the same elevation. Placement of the advertisement is also at odds with the existing spacing of these panels. This is however more apparent on plan than it is on the ground. This is partly due to the adjacent presence of the ATM, which is different in visual character to the other panels which feature signs, and partly due to the relatively narrow width of the space onto which the wall faces. Visual perception of any disruption caused to the appearance of the elevation is therefore very limited. For both this reason, and given that the elevation in question does not otherwise form part of a historic building or street scene, no harm is caused to the Conservation Area.
 8. The advertisement is shaded on account of the fact that it stands under cover, and it is partly obscured by a pillar box. The pillar box is painted a similar tone of red to that employed on the advertisement. The colour of the advertisement is not therefore strongly noticeable or visually discordant in itself.
 9. The advertisement is viewed within the context of a busy shopping area. This is set within a compact space featuring a range of outdoor displays, floor standing and other signs, trolley parking and outdoor seating. The advertisement has added to these features, but the result is not visually obtrusive either individually or cumulatively, and is not perceived as 'clutter' in either regard.
 10. The Meeting House is only partially visible across one side of the covered space to its rear. In this context there is little or no perceived visual relationship between the advertisement and the listed building, and thus no effect on its setting.
 11. The advertisement on the north elevation has replaced a sign of similar size and occupies a position between 2 other wall panels carrying signage. It therefore forms part of an established sequence of panels. These panels face towards a series of bus shelters and a large car park which are excluded from the Conservation Area, and make little contribution to its setting. It is from within these locations that the advertisement is principally viewed.
 12. The Meeting House stands much further back from the frontage of Meeting House Lane than the north elevation of the supermarket. The frontage of the Meeting House is furthermore partially obscured by trees. Very limited, and mostly partial oblique views are therefore available which feature both the advertisement and the front of the Meeting House. As such the advertisement is principally viewed in the context of the modern supermarket to which it is attached, and is not clearly read together with the Meeting House within the street scene.

13. In this regard the tone of red employed on the advertisement is bolder, brighter and more noticeable than the tones of red employed on the 2 signs to either side. However, given the nature of the visual relationship between the advertisement and the front of the Meeting House, this does not in itself cause a level of distraction that prevents or harms visual appreciation of the Meeting House. Indeed, the Meeting House is best viewed close up and from less obstructed viewpoints within which the advertisement is not visible at all.
14. The broader street scene features a wide variety of signage in colours which vary greatly. In this regard there is again nothing particularly remarkable about the colour employed on the advertisement. As such the advertisement on the north elevation harms neither the setting of the Meeting House nor the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
15. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the advertisements are not harmful to amenity, and in this regard they preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and cause no harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building. I have taken into account Policy CS2 of the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Core Strategy 2009 (the CS) which requires new development to be well designed to respect the character, identity, and context of the area's towns and villages; Policy CS3 of the CS, which requires development proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance sites of recognised importance for heritage conservation; Policy DM1 of the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014, which seeks to secure development that conserves and enhances the historic environment and heritage assets; and the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document 2013 which states that advertising for all commercial premises should be sympathetic in terms of extent, location, materials and colours; and so are material in this case. Given that I have concluded that the advertisements are not harmful to amenity, the advertisements do not conflict with these policies or guidance.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR