
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by R E Walker BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M4510/Z/19/3228943

Safestore, Forth Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3PG

- 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 Safestore Properties Limited against the decision of Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/0131/01/ADV, dated 24 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed was originally described as "the installation of new free standing totem sign, new internally illuminated and non illuminated signage."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council issued a split decision in which express advertisement consent was granted for the new free standing totem sign and non illuminated signage. As such, and, for the avoidance of doubt, the appeal before me relates only to the new internally illuminated signage which specifically proposed 5 internally illuminated, flex faced, building mounted, box signs.
3. At the time of my site visit I saw that signage had been installed, following an application granted by the Council in 2018 Ref: 2018/0510/01/ADV. In that application, 5 internally illuminated signs were approved in respect of the 'Safestore' letters only. The other letters to each sign reading 'Self Storage' were not proposed to be illuminated. It is these additional letters that are now sought to be illuminated as part of the appeal proposals. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the illuminated signs on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a sizeable modern warehouse type building, located in a busy city centre area close to the railway station, Life Science Centre and Arena. It is characterised by large multi storey buildings including the adjacent car park and hotel. Existing signage within the immediate area includes a mixture of larger signage, for example at the Life Science Centre, and smaller

- signage. Overall the character of the area does feature both illuminated and non illuminated signs however the area is not cluttered with signage.
6. The nearby railway bridge on Forth Banks and the building on the eastern side of Central Parkway lie within the Central Conservation Area. The site itself lies outside of the Conservation Area (CA).
 7. The signage installed following the 2018 permission is prominent from the surrounding road network, pavements and railway line. From more distant views along the railway line and Redheugh Bridge, 2 of the proposed illuminated signs would be clearly visible if illuminated in full. However, located at either end of the long façade they would not overly dominate. When approaching the railway station along the east coast railway line, 2 of the proposed illuminated signs would be seen together, one above the other, albeit at different angles. I do appreciate that this would be for a short duration. However, when all of the proposed lettering is illuminated this juxtaposition of signage would appear as dominant intrusive features.
 8. From the approach under the railway bridge at the edge of the CA, although angled in different directions, these 2 illuminated signs would again be visible in tandem. These signs would also be viewed in combination with the approved illuminated totem sign. Due to the length of the visible façade, the cumulative effects of all the proposed letters being illuminated, in combination with the approved illuminated totem sign would result in a cluttered, intrusive appearance.
 9. From the pavement along Marlborough adjacent to the Life Science Centre, 3 of the proposed illuminated signs would be seen in full. From the edge of the CA along Central Parkway, 2 of the proposed illuminated signs would also be seen in full. I appreciate that the illuminated signage would occupy a small percentage of the area of the building as a whole. Individually the full extent of the proposed lettering when illuminated would not dominate or appear out of character. However, in my view, the cumulative effects of all the illuminated letters on all 5 signs, where multiple signs are viewed in tandem, would frequently result in a cluttered, intrusive appearance. This includes views from the edge of the CA.
 10. My attention has been drawn to several local policies as well as the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I have taken them into account as material considerations, the power to control advertisements under the regulations may be exercised only in the interests of public safety and amenity. Consequently, in my determination of this appeal, these matters have not, themselves, been decisive.
 11. I do appreciate the appellant's business case to illuminate 'self storage' to advertise the function of the business. However, this does not outweigh the harm to the visual amenity of the area that I have identified in illuminating all the letters on all of the proposed signs. I have also considered the use of a condition to limit the hours of illumination. Although this would lessen the effects by a reduced duration, it would not overcome the harm I have identified during the periods of illumination.
 12. For all these reasons, I therefore conclude that the proposed illuminated signs would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Robert Walker

INSPECTOR