



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2020

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X1118/Z/19/3238751

New Look, No 17 Green Lanes Shopping Centre, Barnstaple, EX31 1UH

- 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 Ms Chloe Easter of New Look Property against the decision of North Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 70288, dated 30 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 September 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is reverse applied vinyl.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity, with particular regard to the Barnstaple Town Centre Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. Barnstaple's New Look store is located in the town centre, inside the Green Lanes Shopping Centre, within which it is accessed. It has, however, a frontage onto Joy Street, which bounds the shopping centre to the south, designed as two individual shopfronts. The appeal relates to the east shopfront (the Shopfront), which comprises a pair of window displays set astride a door. The proposal seeks to apply vinyl graphics to the internal surface of the windows.
4. The Shopfront is within the CA and I am mindful of my duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. There are some vacant retail units within Joy Street, and also units in a similar situation to the Shopfront, where vinyl window graphics have been applied. However, it is predominately an active space with a number of shop fronts participating in its vibrant retail offer. The significance of this section of the CA is therefore derived, in part, from its busy retail atmosphere.
5. The layout of New Look's shop floor leads the rear of shelving units to be visible through the Shopfront. Whilst I acknowledge that these are not particularly attractive, this arrangement does create an appreciable depth to the frontage, allowing some room for display, and the well-lit shop floor can be glimpsed through its windows. Given such, the Shopfront appears as designed, provides a sense of interest and activity to the scene, making a small but positive contribution to the CA.
6. The proposed graphics would remove the perceptible depth of the Shopfront, the glimpsed views of the shop floor beyond, and would eliminate the sense of

activity and vibrancy that the Shopfront contributes to the street scene. The result would be a two-dimensional, inactive frontage which would detract from this historic retail environment. This would not be mitigated by the neutral colour scheme of the vinyl or the incorporation of shop signage within it. Although I acknowledge that the space within the Shopfront may be difficult to clean and maintain if used for poster displays, this matter does not, to my mind, justify the harm to amenity I have identified.

7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to amenity, with particular regard to the CA. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the development plan so far as it is material. It would conflict with Policy DM22 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2018) insofar as it requires advertisements to respect local character. It would also conflict with the relevant aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons outlined above, and taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR