
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2020

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 26 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/Z/20/3246457

2 Central Avenue, Brampton, Huntingdon PE28 4QL

- 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 Mark Allen, Central England Co-operative Ltd against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02338/ADV, dated 29 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2019.
 - The advertisements proposed are 1x off externally illuminated blank fascia sign 1x off externally illuminated mitred fascia sign 5x off dibond window graphic panels 1x off dibond wall graphic panel and 1x off externally illuminated totem sign
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Decisions

1. The appeal relating to the 1x off externally illuminated totem sign is dismissed.
2. The appeal relating to the 1x off externally illuminated blank fascia sign, 1x off externally illuminated mitred fascia sign, 5x off dibond window graphic panels and 1x off dibond wall graphic panel is allowed and express consent for their display is granted 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.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisements on the visual amenity of the building concerned and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a series of advertisements displayed in connection with the Co-operative convenience store recently opened in a building at the eastern end of Central Avenue, the main road into a new housing estate known as Brampton Park. The advertisements have already been erected.
5. The Co-op store occupies about half of the ground floor of a mixed-use building fronting onto Central Avenue with its side elevation facing across a car parking and amenity area towards the roundabout at the entrance to Brampton Park. The building is thus perhaps the most prominent on entering Central Avenue with its visual importance enhanced by its design, retail use, the bend in the road and the adjacent parking/amenity area to the east giving it space.
6. Two externally illuminated fascia signs run along the front and side elevations of the store facing Central Avenue and the parking/amenity area respectively.

The Council argue these are overly prominent in their location and detrimental to visual amenity, with the approved design featuring banding detail between ground and first floors and the fascia signs intended to be above the shop windows underneath the first-floor overhang. However, the banding detail appears to have been omitted during construction and in its absence the location and size of the fascia signs is not visually intrusive in relation to the building or the area generally. The location and size of the signage on the front elevation is also more consistent with the signage space for the second currently unoccupied shop unit.

7. The external illumination of the fascia signs is standard industry practice and to be expected for an early to late convenience store even in a residential area.
8. The Council have no objection to the dibond window and wall graphic panels.
9. The externally illuminated totem sign about 3.9 m high by 1 m wide is located well away from the store beyond the parking/amenity area on the corner of Central Avenue and the side road Keeling Lane. This is a prominent position and clearly visible to all those entering Brampton Park along Central Avenue. Importantly, the grassed amenity area is occupied by a large Oak Tree which is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order to protect its significant amenity value. Indeed, the estate layout with the bend in the road is clearly designed to give visual prominence to this mature Oak Tree when approaching from the roundabout. This attractive vista is significantly harmed by the presence of the totem sign. Whilst the sign is necessarily much smaller than the tree its starkly contrasting colour draws the eye and distracts attention from the tree behind. The totem sign thus constitutes an unduly jarring and discordant feature in the street scene which is significantly detrimental to the visual amenity of the area.
10. For these reasons the totem sign significantly harms the visual amenity of the area in conflict with Policy LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These expect advertisements to be based upon a thorough appraisal of the site's context to deliver attractive spaces and recognise that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly designed and sited. On the other hand the fascia signs and dibond graphic panels do not harm the visual amenity of the building concerned nor the area as a whole.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above the appeal in relation to the totem sign should be dismissed and the appeal in relation to the fascia signs and dibond graphic panels should be allowed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR