
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2020

by JP Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/Z/20/3245402

Sainsburys Petrol Filling Station, Bridge Way, Cobham KT11 1HW

- 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 Supermarkets Ltd against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/2349, dated 16 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 November 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is a replacement combined totem sign at the petrol filling station.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of a replacement combined totem sign at the petrol filling station in accordance with drawing 0473-Cobham PFS [Issued:10/07/19] Rev: C. 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 and the additional conditions below:
 - (1) The advertisement hereby granted by this consent shall only be erected in place of the existing totem sign advertisement as shown on drawing CHQ.08.8452 -115B dated 19 November 2008 and shall not be erected as an addition.
 - (2) The illumination shall not exceed 300 candela/sqm.

Procedural Matters

2. Both parties have confirmed that the submitted drawing at the application stage showed a 6.152m high totem sign. The appellants indicate in paragraph 2.4.2 of their statement that the intention was for a 6.95m high totem sign and the original drawing was submitted in error. However, the drawing showing the 6.152m high totem sign was the subject of consultation and the basis for the Council's duly made decision. It is also notable that the Council's decision notice was concerned about the height of the sign and the impact on the character of the area. The difference between these heights is significant, and therefore it would be inappropriate for me to consider this taller sign. Hence this decision relates to the 6.152m high totem sign as shown in drawing 0473-Cobham PFS [Issued:10/07/19] Rev: C.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed sign on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The petrol station is located on a roundabout at the junction of A425 frontage and is therefore in a prominent position within the street scene. It has a small store, cashpoint, car wash and 22 pumps. There is also an extensive residential area to the rear.
5. The siting of the totem sign is proposed on the frontage of the petrol filling station. It is intended to replace the existing totem sign by adding more signage denoting the range of services that are provided within the store as well as displaying the current fuel prices.
6. The sign would be prominent from both directions along the A425. However, it would be sited adjacent to the petrol station, and its various structures and the evidential commercial activities cover a wide area. The sign would not appear intrusive against this context and would also be seen in conjunction with the operation. Consequently, it would appear appropriate. In any event, the additional signage would be only a small increase of the existing advertising space.
7. Whilst the sign is visible along the A425, it would not be seen as part of a notable view. It is also a similar height to the petrol station roof and proposed to be immediately adjacent. Furthermore, the canopy roof has a pronounced fascia which attracts considerable attention. I therefore conclude that the sign would not look out of place.
8. The proposal is for illumination at 300 candella/sqm. Whilst I made my site visit during the daytime, I did note that there are both tall streetlights and petrol station lights either side of the proposed sign. Inevitably, for safety reasons the petrol station will be a well-lit environment, which is confirmed by the appellants' lighting assessment, and against this backdrop the proposed illumination of the sign would be appropriate.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not harm the amenity of the area. I have had regard to policies DM2, DM5 and DM15 of the Elmbridge Local Plan, Development Management Plan, April 2015, which seek to safeguard the character of the area, avoid light pollution and ensure advertisements are sympathetic to their context and so are material in this case. Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework is similarly relevant. Given my findings the proposal would not conflict with these policies.

Conditions

10. The five standard conditions in the Regulations apply. Additionally, a condition is warranted to confirm that only one sign shall be erected, it effectively defines that the consent is for a replacement sign. Another condition is needed to confirm the luminance since this was a concern in the Council's decision notice.

Conclusion

11. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR