
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2020

by Martin Small BA (Hons) BPI DipCM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/Z/20/3256673

Shirley Cottage, Copthorne Road, Felbridge

- 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 Red Iskandar of Abbey Developments Ltd against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2020/909, dated 15 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is 'Land Acquired' sign board, including contact details set back from entrance gate.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 1 x non-illuminated free-standing sign board on two posts, stating 'Land Acquired' with contact details, set back from the entrance gate as applied for. The consent is until 24 December 2021 and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the proposed advertisement in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. However, I have used the description of the advertisement from the appellant's Statement of Case and Council's decision notice in my decision as more precisely describing the proposed advertisement.
3. The sign board has already been erected but its orientation is not exactly as shown on the submitted drawing. However, I do not consider this to be a material difference and so I have based my decision on the sign as erected.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the sign board on the visual amenity of the area and neighbouring properties.

Reasons

5. Copthorne Road is the A264 leading from East Grinstead to the M23 and Crawley. In the vicinity of the appeal site it is lined with substantial detached properties set back from the road with vegetated front gardens and driveways. The extent of planting and large trees gives the road a verdant character.
6. The appeal site is located within an Area of Special Control for Advertisements and other than two large directional road signs and small bus stop signs, there is an absence of signage along the road in the vicinity of the appeal site.

However, apart from the large trees there are no important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features to which my attention has been drawn or I observed during my site visit.

7. The sign board is metal, 2.44 m square and, from the application form, mounted 1.3 m above the ground on two metal poles set back from the footway. Its size and colour make it noticeable by both motorists and pedestrians from the road and footway on either side when passing in proximity, although other than when directly passing the sign it is seen in the context of vegetation which reduces its visual effect.
8. I note the strong objection of Felbridge Parish Council to the sign board. However, the board is not prominent in longer views along Copthorne Road as it is set back from the road and largely hidden by the larger road sign and a tree from the east and by vegetation from the west. The board is therefore visible for only a very limited period of time when passing. The board does not adversely affect the visual amenity of the large trees along Copthorne Road and is not illuminated.
9. The sign board is not directly in front of the neighbouring properties and is partially screened by existing vegetation in views from these properties. Although close to the boundary of the front garden of 19 Copthorne Road, the sign board does not harmfully affect the visual amenity of the occupiers of these neighbouring properties.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed sign board is not unacceptably harmful to the visual amenity of the area or of neighbouring properties. In reaching this decision I have had regard to paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance on advertisements.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons give above, the appeal is allowed and express consent is granted. In making this decision, I have limited the period of consent to that sought by the appellant. I note that no non-standard conditions have been proposed and I consider that none are necessary.

Martin Small

INSPECTOR