



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2020

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/Z/20/3257952

Lidl, Stockton Street, Littleborough OL15 8YJ

- 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 Lidl Great Britain Ltd against the decision of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01086/ADV, dated 16 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1no. bespoke artificial pitch-faced stone signage wall comprising 1no fascia sign and 2no aluminium lacquered hoarding signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the course of the Council's consideration of the application for advertisement consent, amended plans were received showing a reduced scale of signage and supporting wall and I have had regard to those plans.
3. At the time of my site inspection a sign was present on part of the appeal site. A site plan extract is annotated to state that the proposed sign would be sited in the same location as the existing pylon sign, however, both site plans show it in a location closer to Stockton Street and set back beyond the corner radius. For completeness and to avoid injustice or prejudice to either party, I have considered the proposal with regard to both the siting illustrated on the plans and the plan annotation.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed signage on the amenity of the locality.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is an inclined grass bank alongside a group of trees at the north-western corner of the junction of Church Street / Featherstall Road (A58) and Stockton Street. The site lies within a mixed-use area including commercial, residential and community uses. The site forms part of an open green area leading into a modern commercial estate which includes a recently constructed Lidl food store.
6. The larger commercial premises to the northern side of Church Street, including the Lidl store, are mostly set well back from the main road and are screened by vegetation such that they play a limited active role in the

streetscene along the A58. A fuel filling station and car wash facility are present along the road frontage in close proximity to the site with attendant signage, including totem advertisements. The surrounding development is, however, of a finer grain consisting of mainly single and two-storey residential and commercial development positioned near to the roadside.

7. The proposed signage would be displayed on a purposefully designed wall structure about 3m high and 5.5m long set close to the back of the pavement. It would face roughly eastwards and incorporate an internally illuminated corporate logo approx. 2x2m alongside two unlit information signs.
8. The dimensions of the remote structure would create a significant area of display that would be prominent in the street scene of both Stockton Street and the A58. The incorporation of the large and bold logo which utilises bright colours and a singular large image would, in itself, serve to emphasise the scale of the display. This would be particularly so during times of illumination.
9. Notwithstanding that the sign would be seen in the context of other commercial advertising and would be lower than nearby totem signs, the size and bulk of the wall in an elevated location, when taken with the combined scale of the signage and isolated position, would contrast with the predominant scale of development fronting Church Street / Featherstall Road. In either position, it would appear disproportionately large in its setting and therefore appear intrusive in the streetscene. Moreover, the introduction of a further sign of such significant proportions would add to the existing clutter of signage close to the A58 frontage and have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the locality.
10. The appeal site is close to two residential properties at 4 and 6 Featherstall Road, which the Council identify as non-designated heritage assets. These properties and the appeal site can be seen together, particularly from the direction of Stubbley Mill Road where the proposed advertisements would be viewed in the context of the buildings and thus their setting. The scale of the displays, particularly if sited in the position of the existing sign, which is closer to those buildings, would have a limited but discernible detrimental impact on their setting. This was identified by the Council who considered that the scale of the harm and low significance of the assets did not warrant refusal of the application on that basis. However, whilst the effect on the assets' significance would potentially be balanced by the economic benefits to the store, I find it would, nevertheless, add to the impact on visual amenity in the locality.
11. Conversely, due to the distance of the site from the Littleborough Town Centre Conservation Area (CA), estimated at a distance of 122m to the east by the Council, the proposed signage would not be significant within its setting or adversely impact views into or out of the CA. The effect on the CA would therefore be neutral and its setting preserved such that amenity in relation to it would be unaffected.
12. I acknowledge that the signage is designed to be clear and have a modern appearance of high quality that would assist in announcing the location of the store. It would only be illuminated after dusk and when the store was open. I also note that illuminated adverts of a greater size than the individual elements of the proposed sign have previously been permitted within the main part of the store site; however, these have greater visual containment and are set

away from the finer grain of development on the main road. As such, their circumstances are different to those of the location of the proposed sign.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has briefly outlined the commercial operation of the business and consequential approach to providing standardised advertising to attract customers to the store. Although the proposal is a bespoke design that would meet the operational requirements of the appellant as a retailer and match an existing stone wall on the site, I do not find those reasons to be compelling arguments that outweigh the harm I have identified having regard to the particular circumstances of the site.
14. The main parties are in agreement that the proposal would not cause harm to public safety and I find no reason to disagree with that conclusion.

Conclusion

15. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are relevant, in accordance with the Regulations. I have had regard to Policies P2, P3 and DM1 of Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy (2016) as referred to by the Council and as they seek to protect amenity, together with paragraph 132 of The National Planning Policy Framework. Having found that the proposal would cause harm to local amenity, the proposal conflicts with those policies.
16. For the above reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR