



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2020

by Elaine Benson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/Z/20/3252262

Welcome Hall, Between Abbey Way and Lily's Walk, High Wycombe, HP11 2DQ

- 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 Task Service Ltd against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council (former Wycombe District Council).
 - The application Ref 19/07587/ADV, dated 26 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1 x 48 sheet freestanding digital advertising display unit and 1 x 48 sheet gable mounted digital advertising display unit, measuring 3.1m high x 6.2m wide, and comprising pressed metal frame with sealed LED screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed displays on visual amenity.

Reasons

3. Both of the 48 sheet advertisement displays would be located in a built-up commercial area where such displays can be acceptable in principle. The locality is characterised by the local transport infrastructure which carries large volumes of traffic through the town centre.
4. The freestanding sign would stand on a strip of land adjoining the service road to the Eden Centre, a shopping and entertainment complex. It would be close to the Abbey Way (A40) dual carriageway and would stand 3m from ground level, facing traffic travelling south. There are few such advertisement displays in the locality. The display would be a 'standard 48 sheet' size. Its immediate backdrop would be a concrete wall which it would rise above and beyond that, a large well-windowed building which I consider has more modernist architectural merit than does the appellant. Due to its overall dimensions and elevation above ground level, the display would have an overly dominant appearance in this location which I consider would harm local amenity.
5. In reaching this decision I have considered the design and location of a signage display approved on appeal (reference APP/K0425/Z/19/3220932) at the nearby Riverside Club. There are significant contextual differences between the two advertisement schemes, including the contrast between modern buildings of little architectural interest, listed buildings and the conservation area.
6. The gable-mounted signage display would be sited on the upper level of the Eden Centre's multi-storey car park, facing traffic travelling north on Abbey Way. There would be long-range views of the proposed sign which would be

significantly deeper and wider than the existing signage which identifies the Eden Centre. Its overall size would be unduly prominent against the mass of the car park to a degree that would be out of scale.

7. The function of advertisement displays requires a degree of prominence. Nonetheless, despite their simple rectangular form, horizontal emphasis and choice of materials, I conclude that both signs would appear out of scale within their contexts and this harmful effect would be exacerbated by their internal illumination. Thus, the signage displays would harm the visual amenity of the surrounding area.
8. I have considered Policies DM35 and DM37 of the Wycombe District Local Plan. Amongst other things they state that any proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and contribute positively towards local distinctiveness and identity. However, the Regulations require that decisions be made only in the interests of amenity and where applicable, public safety. This is echoed by the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. Therefore, although the Council's policies alone cannot be decisive, I have taken them into account as a material consideration.
9. This decision would not prejudice the consideration of a similar display in another location, including elsewhere on the flyover. Each proposal must be considered on its own merits. No other matters raised are sufficient to affect my conclusions.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of both advertisements would be detrimental to the interests of amenity and the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR