
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2021 by A Coombes

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/Z/21/3274034

Site Address Twickenham Volkswagen, South Road, Twickenham TW2 5NT

- 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 Simon Poole against the decision of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0393/ADV, dated 5 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed was described as “new brand signage for the dealership including a new dual brand pylon and fascia signs.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and consent is granted for the display of an internally illuminated dual brand pylon and an internally illuminated VW pole sign. 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 following additional conditions:
 - 1) The intensity of illumination shall not exceed 270 candelas per square metre.
 - 2) The advertisements shall only be illuminated inside of the opening hours for the visiting public of the premises to which they are associated and should be switched off at all other times.
 - 3) The illumination of the advertisements shall be constant and not appear to be intermittent or flashing.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The Council issued a split decision, which granted consent for a number of fascia signs and refused approval of the two freestanding signs. Therefore, this appeal will focus solely on the advertisements which were refused consent, and the description in the formal decision has been adjusted accordingly.

4. The appeal form incorrectly states that only one freestanding sign was refused approval. However, the grounds of appeal clearly seeks approval for two freestanding signs. In the interest of clarity, this appeal will deal with both of these.
5. The advertisements were in situ at the time of the site visit and therefore the appeal has been considered on a retrospective basis.

Main Issue

6. The Council has not raised any concerns in respect of public safety and I have no reason to disagree. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

7. Located on a busy road with mixed commercial and residential uses, the appeal site comprises a VW Group car dealership. It is a two storey, detached building which hosts a showroom, workshop, and office space, and is set within a commercial complex that includes both a LIDL supermarket and B&Q store. The proposed advertisements include two freestanding signs. One is an internally illuminated Cupra/Seat dual brand pylon which is located on the north west side of the application site on the grassed area close to the entrance off South Road. To the south west of the pylon is an internally illuminated VW pole sign.
8. The appeal site is located opposite a row of detached houses and a block of flats, some of which are listed as buildings of Townscape Merit. Although the adjacent road is suburban, the appeal site is immediately located within a commercial context, where another freestanding sign for LIDL and B&Q is also located. This sign is wider and of a similar, if not higher, height to both of the advertisements subject to this appeal. On approach from either end of South Road the pylon and pole signs are visible, but the designs are uncomplicated and do not dominate the street scene. When approaching from the direction of Wellington Road, the LIDL/B&Q sign appears more prominent than the advertisements at the appeal site. Therefore, in terms of siting and scale, the advertisements are acceptable within their context and are not detrimental to the visual amenity of the commercial area of South Road.
9. Although there are two signs in situ, being staggered and spaced apart allows for both to be seen concurrently from many viewpoints. This ensures that the advertisements do not appear visually cluttered. Three brands are represented across the two advertisements and, given the nature of their business relationship, this is not excessive. The advertisements do increase illumination levels within the area. However, given the commercial character of the immediate vicinity, and the sufficient separation distance between the advertisements and nearby residential properties, the light spill does not cause undue harm to amenity. Furthermore, conditions can be put in place to ensure the impact of the illumination on nearby residents remains acceptable.
10. For the reasons given above, the proposed advertisements would not cause harm to the amenity of the area. Although not decisive, regard has been had to Policy LP1 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan, adopted 2018 and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Policy LP1 requires that advertisements should complement the proportions, character, materials and detailing of the surrounding street scene. Paragraph

136 of the Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed and such advertisements should be subject to control.

Other Matters

11. Concerns have been raised around the loss of green landscaping and a boundary wall at the appeal site. However, the two freestanding advertisements are not directly related to any significant loss of landscaping. Furthermore, neighbour consultation responses comment on the cumulative impact of the commercial developments on the character of South Road over time. However, this decision must focus on the impact of the two advertisements within the current context.

Conditions

12. I recommend that conditions should be attached to control the level, hours, and nature of the illumination in the interests of preventing danger to road users and preserving amenity. The Council have requested that a further condition is attached to ensure adherence with the plans, however, this is not necessary given that consent would only be granted for the submitted drawings and related details.

Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is allowed.

A Coombes

Appeal Planning Officer

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR