The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 2 November 2021

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/H/21/3279366
IKEA Ltd, Eastgate Road, Bristol BS5 6XX

- 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 IKEA Properties Investments Ltd against the decision of Bristol City Council.
- The application Ref 20/03186/A, dated 17 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2021.
- The advertisement proposed is new and replacement elevational signage, including new internally illuminated IKEA wordmark NE elevation, replacement externally illuminated IKEA wordmark signs, unlit block advertisement banner and car park/pedestrian entrance signage.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and consent is granted for new and replacement elevational signage, including new internally illuminated IKEA wordmark NE elevation, replacement externally illuminated IKEA wordmark signs, unlit block advertisement banner and car park/pedestrian entrance signage with the exception of the 'Replacement high level 'IKEA' and 'home furnishings' signs SE and SW elevation (W3a W2)', and subject to the following additional condition:

    4) The internally illuminated IKEA wordmark NE elevation sign (W3b) permitted by this consent shall be statically illuminated, only illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates and the intensity of the illumination of the sign shall be no greater than 200cd/m2.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council issued a split decision with the description of development being given as 'New and replacement elevational signage, including new internally illuminated IKEA wordmark NE elevation, replacement externally illuminated IKEA wordmark signs, unlit block advertisement banner and car park/pedestrian entrance signage'.

3. The elements of the scheme refused are referred to on the decision notice as 'New high level internally illuminated 3m 'IKEA' wordmark NE elevation (W3b) Replacement high level 'IKEA' and 'home furnishings' signs SE and SW elevation (W3a W2) (due to level of illumination)'. The appellant has indicated that they are only seeking to appeal against the refusal of the NE elevation sign (W3b). I have assessed the scheme on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the internally illuminated IKEA wordmark NE elevation advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The sign would be most readily seen from within or near the adjacent retail park where it would be viewed in the context of numerous other commercial signs. Some are of a similar size and at a similar height to the one disputed and illumination is also not uncommon in the area.

6. The sign would be statically illuminated at a similar level to others nearby and located on an elevation where there is existing signage. There are and would be similar sized signs on the same building and the disputed sign would not extend above the existing building height.

7. Other than in short range views the curve of the road on the approach to this elevation and presence of nearby landscaping would, at least in part, screen the sign. From residential properties, and the passing views from the motorway and other nearby roads, other elevations of the appeal building, and signs are more conspicuous. Views would be largely long-range glimpses, seen with the extensive existing commercial signage and filtered by mature vegetation.

8. Therefore, although larger than many, the presence of a sign of this type and size, and being internally illuminated, would not appear alien to the area or be an overbearing presence. A condition is imposed regarding illumination type, levels and times that would further reduce the prominence of the sign.

9. External plant, walkways and vegetation mean the sign would not be readily seen with most of the existing and proposed wordmark signs at the building. Where it would be seen with similar signs, views would be angled, largely limited to within the retail park and again filtered by mature vegetation and buildings. In addition, the building is of a substantial size. Consequently, the sign would not result in a cluttered appearance.

10. Therefore, the disputed sign would not harm the visual amenity of the area. Policies BCS21 and BCS23 of the Core Strategy[1] and Policies DM26, DM27, and DM29 of the SADMP[2], and the Framework seek to ensure the character and appearance of the area is not harmed, regard is had to the host building and wider area and prevent pollution. Given I have concluded that the proposal would not harm visual amenity, it would not conflict with these policies.

11. As effects on biodiversity were not raised with regards to the sign subject to this appeal, Policies DM19 and DM22 of the SADMP weigh neither for nor against the proposal.

Other Matters

12. Public safety and biodiversity are not identified as an issue by the Council and in light of the above factors, I have reached the same view.

[1] Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy
[2] Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

Conditions

13. An additional condition is imposed limiting the type, level and times of illumination to prevent harm to visual amenity and for clarity.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR