

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24th February 2022

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/Z/21/3286103

Fylde Coast Radio Studios, Starr Gate, Blackpool, FY4 1RU

- 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 Fylde Coast Radio against the decision of Blackpool Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0790, dated 24 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 October 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is 48-sheet sized digital LED advertising unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is prominently located on an area of open land, near to a single storey building, within a tram turning loop, close to the Promenade's major junction with Squires Gate Lane and close to Starr Gate tram station.
 4. The site is within a mixed use area, including residential, commercial and transport uses.
 5. The proposal would comprise a large free-standing double-sided LED advertisement. It would stand high off the ground on a central support leg.
 6. During my site visit, I observed that whilst the area is in mixed use, its overall character is derived from a strong sense of openness and spaciousness. The topography is flat and there are expansive views, including across residential and commercial uses and over sand dunes. Also, whilst there is considerable tram related infrastructure in the area, notably poles and electric cabling, as well as the occasional presence of public information signage, there is a noticeable lack of general advertisements and signage.
 7. As a consequence of the above, eyes are drawn to the residential and commercial architecture of the area, as well as to the sand dunes and beyond; and this serves to emphasise the area's pleasant sense of openness and spaciousness.
 8. Taking all of this into account, I find that the scale and height of the proposed advertisement would combine with its prominent location to present a visually intrusive, unduly dominant feature. The impact of this would be intensified as a
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result of the incongruous appearance of a large and prominent advertisement in a location where no such feature exists.

9. In addition, whereas the infrastructure associated with the tram line appears regular and rhythmical, for example, the similar design and spacing of the poles carrying the electric cabling, the advertisement would appear as an awkward one-off structure that would fail to integrate with, or positively relate to, the surrounding area. Rather, for the reasons above, I consider that it would jar with its surroundings.
10. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the advertisement proposed would be detrimental to visual amenity. This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework; to Core Strategy¹ Policy CS7; to Local Plan² Policies LQ1 and LQ13; and to the Council's Signage Supplementary Planning Document (2018), which together amongst other things, seek to protect visual amenity.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR

¹ Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027 (2016).

² Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 (2006) (Saved 2009).