



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2022

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5TH April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/Z/22/3290628

Sears Property, 16 Market Place, Wokingham RG40 1AL

- 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 Daniel Sears against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 213398, dated 12 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is '1no externally illuminated fascia sign with channel light and 1 no. non-illuminated projecting sign'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of *the '1 no. externally illuminated fascia sign with channel light and 1 no. non-illuminated projecting sign'* as applied for. 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue for the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area, particularly whether the proposal conserves or enhances the significance of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a mid-terrace three storey building, with a commercial use at ground floor and residential or office accommodation above. It is located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) fronting the point where Denmark Street opens out into the historic market square. Denmark Street, Market Place and other off-shoot roads are continuously lined with a wide variety of historic buildings interspersed with more modern development. The area is predominantly commercial shopping frontage, featuring a range of shopfront types and designs. It is this spatial arrangement and eclectic mix of historic buildings which contribute to the significance of the CA.
4. Within the CA, and particularly within Denmark Street and Market Place there are a wide variety of advertisement types, fascia and hanging sign designs, scale and forms of illumination. Of particular prominence in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site are 'Doughnut Time' which has pale blue-green fascia, internally illuminated applied letters and a neon doughnut window display, 'Robert Dyas' which has a reflective UPVC fascia with applied letters

and hanging sign, 'Edinburgh Woollen Mill' which has a timber fascia illuminated by a trough light, 'Romans' which has a UPVC internally illuminated fascia sign with a similar colour scheme and text size as the appeal site, and 'Rynd' which has large internally illuminated applied letters.

5. Whilst the scale of lettering proposed at the appeal site is large and somewhat bold, it is not out of scale with other advertisements in the immediate vicinity and therefore would not be unduly prominent and dominant. Whilst the Council has raised concerns regarding the strident colouring proposed, the proposed black background and white integral lettering is an understated and appropriate colour palette for the area. Similarly, the yellow, black and blue logo is a colour palette similar to other signs within the area and would not appear unduly prominent or incongruous.
6. The method of illumination proposed is also understated and an appropriate form of illumination, in keeping with other shopfronts in the vicinity and the wide variety of illumination methods in the CA.
7. Whilst timber sign-painting is a preferable material for historic street frontages, the CA comprises of a very varied mix of fascia materials, with a strong prevalence of large applied letters, printed applied uPVC or similar fascia signs. In this respect, the matte finish of the appeal proposal assists it in blending well with its surroundings and avoids undue prominence. The sizes of fascia and hanging signs are also very varied within the vicinity and the proposed fascia and hanging sign are proportionately sized to the host building and shopfront.
8. For these reasons, I find that the appeal proposal would not result in harm to the amenity of the area and would not cause harm to those elements of the CA, nor to the setting of other nearby heritage assets, which contribute to their significance. The appeal proposal therefore complies with policies TB19 and TB24 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD), adopted 2014, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies seek, amongst other things, to maintain amenity and conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets.

Conclusions

9. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan. The appeal is accordingly allowed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR