The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2022

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25TH July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/Z/22/3297735
159-163 Devonshire Road, Blackpool FY3 8BQ

- 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 Global against the decision of Blackpool Council.
- The application Ref 22/0061, dated 27 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2022.
- The advertisement proposed is 1no. Digital Display.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) requires that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. Therefore, while I have taken account of the policies referred to by the Council in its Decision Notice, they have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

4. No.159-163 Devonshire Road is an Esso Petrol Filling Station (PFS) and its forecourt adjacent a busy signal controlled junction between Devonshire Road and Talbot Road. The proposed digital advertisement would measure around 3.4m by 6.4m mounted on steel supports around 2.4m from the ground. It would abut the flank elevation of No.368 Talbot Road (No.368), a three-storey building that forms part of a local parade of shops with flats above, and is located in the north east corner of the PFS forecourt.

5. The proposed advertisement would obscure or replace the existing fascia sign of No.368 which returns the corner from the front to flank elevation. It would be located above a band of render and because of its size and height would fill much of the first floor flank, positioned right up to the front edge of the building and dominating the elevation.

6. Because of its size and elevated position, the proposed advertisement would appear particularly prominent for passers-by travelling east on Talbot Road,

notably when stopped at the junction with Devonshire Road. I acknowledge that the advertisement has been sited further within the PFS forecourt than an earlier proposal and would be viewed, in part, in the context of the adjacent PFS canopy and pumps. However, I nonetheless find it would appear obtrusive against the simple flank elevation of No.368 and in the context of the attractive houses fronting Talbot Road opposite. Although not viewed straight on, the harm would be similar for passers-by travelling north on Devonshire Road. The proposed advertisement would also be unduly prominent for residents whose houses front Devonshire Road, on the opposite side of the junction, and from the back of the closest houses on Catterall Close.

7. I accept that signage is an expected part of a commercial street scene. However, I observed on my site visit that although No.368 forms part of a small parade of shops and there are retail and commercial uses to the south on Devonshire Road, the character of the area is a mix of commercial and residential, with the Talbot Road, Devonshire Road junction providing a transition to a predominantly residential area to the north. The introduction of a large digital advertisement would be a dominant feature that would be markedly out of keeping and discordant in the visual context of this transition area. This would be exacerbated by the alternating imagery and text.

8. The location of the appeal site adjacent a four-way signal controlled junction means there is a reasonable amount of existing street furniture, including the traffic signals themselves, street light columns and pedestrian crossing barriers. This is not, however, uncommon at a road junction and I did not find that the proposed advertisement would particularly result in, or add to, visual clutter in the streetscene.

9. Nevertheless, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have a significantly adverse effect on the amenity of the area. Consequently, it would conflict with the amenity and design requirements of Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2012-2027) (2016) and saved Policies LQ1 and LQ13 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001/2016 (2006); the Council's Signage Supplementary Planning Document (2018) and paragraph 136 of the Framework.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would be detrimental to amenity. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR