



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2023

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/Z/23/3316582

St Michael's Vicarage, Calvert Place, Blackpool FY3 7RU

- 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 Alison Wilkinson on behalf of Hope Community Church against the decision of Blackpool Council.
- The application Ref 22/0834, dated 24 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2023.

The advertisement proposed is described as "we wish to erect a permanent noticeboard that will be blue aluminium composite panel size 2440 x 1220 cm railed on the back and fitted onto 2 posts 76 mm diameter. The noticeboard will contain 3 A1 aluminium lockable poster cases fitted towards the bottom of the sign panel. Lettering will be in white and the maximum size of graphics depending on wording will be 250 mm. The Height to the top of the panel from the ground will be 2.54 m. There are concrete posts to show that a noticeboard has been on this site previously, but we are erecting new posts. The noticeboard will be to advertise events and details of Hope Community Church."

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of a noticeboard, 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.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the Council determined the application, it has adopted the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (LP2). The policies in the new Local Plan replace all the policies in the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 which were included in the Council's reason for refusal of the application. I have determined the appeal based on the current applicable policies in the Blackpool Local Plan Core Strategy Part 1 2016 (LP1) and the LP2.
3. The Council's reason for refusal relates specifically to matters of amenity. There was no objection raised by the Highway Authority on the grounds of public safety and I find no reason to take a different view on that matter.
4. I have amended the description of development used in my decision from that set out in the banner heading above, which has been taken from the planning application form. The amended description leaves out wording relating to details that are otherwise included on the plans and documents submitted with the application and is unnecessary to describe the development.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

6. The appeal site relates to St Michael's Vicarage, which is a two-storey, detached dwelling, located in the Grange Park area of Blackpool. The property is located at the junction of Calvert Place and Dinmore Avenue. The vicarage is associated with Hope Community Church, which has no permanent premises but carries out services in local buildings including at the vicarage. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, although I observed that Dinmore Avenue was a busy thoroughfare for pedestrians and vehicles, with The Grange neighbourhood centre located a short distance away.
7. The proposed advertisement would comprise a freestanding sign measuring approximately 2.4m by 1.2m. The advertisement would be located on two steel posts, with an overall height of approximately 2.5m. The advertisement has been designed to display three poster style advertisements at any one time, which could be changed periodically. The purpose of the advertisement is to advertise the activities of Hope Community Church.
8. Whilst I acknowledge that the appeal site is of a more typical residential appearance, the use as a vicarage is different to that of a typical dwelling, in that it plays a role in the local community. I also noted that there are two existing posts sited within the same general location as the proposed advertisement, indicating that previously a noticeboard or other type of advertisement is likely to have been present in this location, which is supported by the appellant's evidence. Whilst I have not been provided with any details of this noticeboard, the Council have not provided any evidence to dispute that this is the case.
9. In terms of visual amenity, the advertisement would be visible in the surrounding area. However, it would be viewed against the mature planting which is located in the garden and along its boundary with Dinmore Avenue. Furthermore, the advertisement would be sited directly behind a small fence which has the street name sign directly in front of it.
10. I accept that the corner location of the property makes the siting more prominent. However, the noticeboard needs to be in a location which is accessible and able to be viewed by the local community. As I noted above, the footpath along Dinmore Avenue was well used, presumably by residents accessing the services and facilities at the nearby centre. The advertisement would therefore be visible and accessible to passers-by. However, as it would be non-illuminated and in the context I have outlined it would not cause harm to the visual amenity of the area.
11. The Council has suggested that the appellant consider alternative locations for the advertisement. However, as I have found that no harm would result to amenity from the proposed advertisement in the location put forward, it is not necessary to consider alternative locations. Future applications for advertisements at other properties would need to be considered on their own individual merits.

12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on visual amenity. I have taken into account Policy CS7 of the LP1 and DM24 of the LP2 which require, amongst other things, advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and be of the highest design quality and so are material in this case, along with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would not harm amenity, it does not conflict with these policies.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the display of the proposed advertisement would not be detrimental to the interests of amenity or public safety. The appeal should, therefore, be allowed and express consent granted subject to five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR