



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2023

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/Z/23/3321831

452 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8EA

- 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 Motor Fuel Group against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/05422/ADV, dated 15 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is 7m pole sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) both make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. The Council's decision notice includes reference to Policies 55 (Responding to context) and 65 (Visual pollution) of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) (LP). Whilst these policies cannot by themselves be decisive, I have taken them into account as a material consideration.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. Cherry Hinton Road is well-trafficked and while there are a mix of uses along this road, the surrounding context in the vicinity of the appeal site is mainly of a residential, suburban character.
5. The appeal site comprises of a filling station forecourt with canopy and associated sales building. The site has an array of signage including a large totem sign close to the front boundary, fascia signage on the sales building, directional signage as well as fixed and moveable advertisements within the forecourt and boundary verges. Together with the multitude of other vertical structures which include petrol pumps, air, water, vacuum and charging infrastructure, gives the site an overall congested commercial appearance.
6. Other close by signage along Cherry Hinton Road has a comparatively more understated presence in the street scene such as at the neighbouring Cambridge Detachment of the Royal Marines Reserve, the Saint Phillip Howard Catholic Church which sits opposite the appeal site, and the advertisement at the nearest bus stop.

7. The proposal would be sited within a grassed area close to the boundary with a cul-de-sac serving the dwellings at Nos 454 – 464 Cherry Hinton Road. There are some fixed display poster units and a two-sided 'entry/exit' sign within this area. On my site visit I noted that tall vertical metal pipework has also been installed on this grassed area. Although not indicated on the plans, there was also a further poster sign positioned on this grass, close to the boundary with the public footway, as well as some moveable 'Costa Express' signage. Whether or not these further advertisements would remain in situ, there is in any case a mix of structures on this part of the site. Even so, the containment of the taller advertisements to within the vicinity of the sales building and canopy assists the transition towards neighbouring residential properties to the east.
8. The proposed totem style sign would be of a considerable scale which would be comparable with the height of the large advertisements in the vicinity of the sales building. The sign would increase in width towards the top and would be internally illuminated both of which would further draw the eye to passers-by. I accept this may be the intention of the advertisement. Nevertheless, its position away from the sales building and close to the front boundary would be unduly prominent, resulting in a more abrupt interface with the neighbouring residential environment. Moreover, its position amongst the other fixed signage and vertical infrastructure within the grassed area would have an unacceptably cluttered appearance.
9. Even if the illuminance level of 300cd/m² would be the same or similar to the levels of illumination to the forecourt canopy 'BP helios' and the shop fascia, this does not alter my overall finding that the proposal would be detrimental to the order and appearance of the street scene.
10. I conclude, the proposed advertisement would have a significantly harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. For this reason, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies 55 and 65 of the LP which requires that proposals help to create high quality places and avoid unnecessary clutter as well as the provisions of paragraph 136 of the Framework which confirms that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out, the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR