



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 October 2023

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/Z/23/3325237

14 Woodford Road, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 1JJ

- 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 Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/086794, dated 12 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is 13 new signs associated with the proposed new Sainsbury's local store. The signage comprises: 3no. fascia signs; 1no. projecting sign; 2no. 'welcome panel' signs; 1no. ATM surround; 4no. car park signs; and 2no. totem signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 3no. fascia signs; 1no. projecting sign; 2no. 'welcome panel' signs; 1no. ATM surround; 4no. car park signs; and 2no. totem signs 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 and the following additional conditions:-
 - 1) The intensity of the illumination of the signs permitted by this consent shall be no greater than the candela specified by the Proposed Signage Details (drawing ref. PL-A-2013).

Preliminary Matter

2. The appeal proposal is to display a total of 13no. new advertisements. The Council have raised no issue in respect of the 3no. fascia signs, 1no. projecting sign, 2no. 'welcome panel' signs, 1no. ATM surround and 4no. car park signs. I have no reason to form a different view to the Council in this regard and my consideration is therefore limited to the 2no. totem signs in dispute. I observed on my site visit that all of the advertisements have been installed.

Main Issue

3. The Council does not raise concern with the proposal in terms of public safety. The main issue in this case is therefore the effect of the 2no. totem signs on the amenity of the area, having particular regard to the setting of the Syddal Park Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a former two-storey Barclays Bank building on the corner of Woodford Road and Syddal Road, recently converted to a Sainsbury's local convenience store. The site is just outside the Syddal Park Conservation Area (the CA), which lies to the south and west. The CA is to the south-west of the retail centre of Bramhall concentrated around a layout of six residential streets, including Syddal Road which runs broadly east, west. I have not been referred to any formal appraisal of the CA, however, from my observations on site, I find its significance is generally derived from the pleasant, verdant residential area characterised by large, predominantly detached and semi-detached houses, built in the late C19th and early C20th, set in generous plots. On the opposite side of Syddal Road, Nos.1 and 3 Syddal Road lie within the CA and together with the appeal site (including its car park), form part of the transition from the Bramhall retail centre to the residential area.
5. The small car park associated with the Sainsbury's is located to the rear of the store accessed from Syddal Road. The Syddal Road totem sign is internally illuminated, measuring 2500mm in height by 1103mm wide. It is located on the back edge of the pavement in a small bed of planting on the east side of the entrance to the car park. It is accepted that because of its size and siting, from the junction of Syddal Road and Woodford Road, the totem is prominent and is viewed, in part, in the context of those houses on Syddal Road beyond, which fall within the CA. It is, however also seen in the context of the two-storey, fairly monolithic side and rear elevation of the Sainsbury's store, signage within the store car park and signage associated with the dental practice opposite. I observed that it does not appear disproportionate in scale to the Sainsbury's store, nor does it harm the amenity of the transitional area which it forms part, or consequently the setting of the CA. Similarly, when viewed from within the CA, the totem sign assimilates well with the Sainsbury's store itself and the fascia signage of retail units on Woodford Road.
6. The Sainsbury's store is set back behind a ramped entrance, fronting Woodford Road which is a busy high street with a mixture of ground floor retail and commercial units with associated fascia and projecting signage. The internally lit totem on Woodford Road is of a larger size than the totem on Syddal Road, measuring 3007mm in height and 1103mm wide. Although sited reasonably close to the highway, the totem broadly aligns with the prevailing building line of properties fronting Woodford Road to the north, affording it prominence. Whilst of reasonable scale, I do not however find it unduly prominent or incongruous, rather it relates well to its busy high street setting.
7. I observed that much of the fascia signage on Woodford Road and the totem signage associated with the Esso garage to the south include bright colour palettes reflecting (in some cases) corporate branding. The design and colour palette of the totem signs do not cause harm to this prevailing character and would not be unexpected in a high street location.
8. I therefore conclude that the 2no. totem signs would not cause harm to visual amenity, or the setting of the Syddal Park Conservation Area. In its reason for refusal, the Council referred to Policy SIE-3 of the Core Strategy DPD (2011). As this seeks to protect the historic environment I have taken it into account as a material consideration. However, in my determination of this appeal, the Council's policy is not, in itself, decisive.

Conditions

9. In addition to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations, the Council have proposed two additional conditions in respect of the level of illuminance and a curfew between 08.00hrs and 22.00hrs, when there would be no illumination. In respect of the level of illuminance, the Council have proposed a maximum level of 144cd/sqm but this differs from the specification provided by the appellant and I have no justification before me for the lower level. Further, given the appeal site is in a busy high street location, with existing street lighting on both Woodford Road and Syddal Road, I do not find the suggested curfew necessary in the interests of the visual amenity of residents. I have therefore omitted this condition and imposed a condition that requires the illuminance of the adverts to be in accordance with the Proposed Signage Details.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, I conclude that that appeal should be allowed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR