
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2023

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/Z/23/3323581

**Howards Used Car Centre, Torino House, Boundary Road, Brympton
BA22 8PT**

- 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 Howards Motor Group against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00743/ADV, dated 15 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2023.
 - The proposal is to display an internally illuminated free standing aluminium 'Howards Used Car Centre' blue totem sign - 1580mm (wide) x 5000mm (high) x 220mm (deep).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for an internally illuminated free standing aluminium 'Howards Used Car Centre' blue totem sign - 1580mm (wide) x 5000mm (high) x 220mm (deep) as applied for. The consent is for ten years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Preliminary Matter

2. The sign is in place; this does not alter the way I consider the merits of the proposal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The Council's Decision Notice refers to a development plan policy. The Regulations require that decisions be made only in interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, a development plan policy alone cannot be decisive, but I have taken it into account as a material consideration. In this instance the Council raises no concerns with regard to public safety.
5. The proposed display is as described above.

Amenity

6. The appeal property a car sales premises with forecourt – a used car dealership next to a new car main dealer. The sign is for the frontage verge beyond the highway footway. It would sit alongside, slightly further from the road, a similarly sized sign for the new car element of the dealership. This first sign has been approved by the Council under reference 23/00127/ADV. The site is
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within a trading estate environment albeit more attractive than many with verges and trees helping to soften the streetscene impact of large buildings. Locally signs are of varied nature and the area is clearly commercial in nature.

7. The Council is concerned that the sign would detract from the character of the surrounding streetscene and the local trading estate amenity. There is a suggestion that the immediate site would be cluttered with advertisements harmful to amenity.
8. I appreciate that it is very easy for commercial premises to become unsightly with signage clutter and one must seek to prevent wider harm to amenity. However, in this instance I found the sign to be logically positioned, not disproportionate, and in sync with the scale and nature of the business which it seeks to identify and advertise. The previous approval for the sign alongside, referenced above, and in a slightly more prominent position, does rather set the scene. The two signs together would be complementary and not jarring on the eye to my mind. The wider scene would still remain semi-sylvan and the qualities of the trading estate would not be impacted.
9. Given the immediate and wider context I conclude that the illuminated sign is suitable for this position in amenity terms.

Conditions

10. The Council suggests a five-year display but I would consider ten years to be a reasonable display period for the consent bearing in mind the question of amenity, the seemingly established context, and the degree of investment needed. Otherwise, the Council does not suggest any conditions beyond the standard ones and I would agree with that approach.

Overall conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would not be unduly detrimental to the amenity of the area. Accordingly, I shall allow the appeal.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR