



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2024

by J Reid BA(Hons) BArch(Hons) RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/Z/23/3332577

Three Bridges Football Club, Jubilee Walk, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1LQ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Three Bridges Football Club against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is CR/2022/0548/ADV.
 - The advertisement is "illuminated and non static advertisement display board".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the illuminated and non static advertisement display board at Three Bridges Football Club, Jubilee Walk, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1LQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CR/2022/0548/ADV, dated 24 August 2022. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and the following additional conditions:
 - 1) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/m² during the hours of darkness and shall be no greater than 5,000 cd/m² during the hours of daylight.
 - 2) Any change to the advertisement displayed shall be instantaneous and the advertisement shall not display any moving image.
 - 3) The advertisement shall not change more than once in every 5 seconds.

Preliminary matter and main issue

2. The description in the banner heading above has been taken from the application form, but the typo in that description has been amended in the Decision for clarity.
3. The main issue is the effect that the advertisement has on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and thus, on amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is situated on the roughly north west side of the busy 3 lane Haslett Avenue East at the back of the clubhouse by the boundary with the road. The site and the adjoining land controlled by the appellant, which includes the clubhouse and the football pitch, adjoins Jubilee Fields to roughly north east and a cricket ground to roughly north west and west, and it is

- opposite a mainly commercial and industrial area including the Stephenson Way industrial units and some mature trees.
5. The advertisement (sign), which is a little over 5 m tall, includes 2 roughly 6 m² landscape orientated screens mounted on a metal framework. So, each screen can be readily seen by road and pavement users travelling in either direction along Haslett Avenue East. The various advertisements displayed do not include moving images, but they change instantaneously every 10 seconds.
 6. The appeal sign is sited well away from the banner signs on the gable ends of the clubhouse, and it is largely screened by the building from the mostly open land within and beyond the football ground. There are no other illuminated signs on the same side of the road close by. However, the appeal sign is seen in the same views as the floodlights by the pitch, the street furniture, the clubhouse's plain and lengthy back, and the tall lengthy boundary fence by the road. So, the interest provided by the appeal sign makes a positive contribution to the street scene on the north west side of Haslett Avenue East. Due to the curve in the road, the appeal sign is seen against a mainly commercial backdrop in the partly leafy views in both directions along the road. So, whilst the varied advertisements displayed are relatively small features in most views, their changing colours and content provide welcome vitality in the views in both directions along the road, which is important to the character of the commercial and industrial area close by. So, the sympathetically sited appeal sign respects and reflects the character and appearance of the urban locality.
 7. Regarding the content of the displays, the previous consent for an 'illuminated sign to display match events', ref CR/2021/0424/ADV dated 23 September 2021, was granted subject to the same conditions that the Council has suggested in this appeal, with one minor exception which I shall deal with later. So, the displays of 'match events' granted by the previous consent could have included full colour images of, say, the club's badge, photographs of players, football paraphernalia, and a range of graphics relating to fixtures, designed, as with all advertisements including those shown in the Council's photographs, to catch the eyes of passers-by. So, the effect of those displays could be about the same as the effect of the displays in this appeal, which I have found to be acceptable. Moreover, because it would not be necessary to control the subject matter in the displays in this case to, say, protect the street scene in Haslett Avenue East or the character and appearance of the area, the content of the advertisements displayed could not reasonably be controlled by condition.
 8. For reasons including that the appeal sign is not sited within and does not overhang the public highway, the Council has not raised concerns about public safety, and I agree.
 9. Therefore, I consider that the advertisement does not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and thus, it does not harm amenity. It also satisfies Policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 which seeks high quality design and respect for context, guidance in the Crawley Borough Council Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document, and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) which seeks well-designed places.
 10. As the appeal sign is acceptable, consent should be granted subject to the imposition of suitable conditions.

Conditions

11. The Council's suggested conditions have been considered and re-worded as necessary in the light of Framework paragraph 56 and Planning Practice Guidance. The conditions to control the level of illumination, the way in which displays change and to prevent moving images, and the frequency with which the displays change, are necessary in the interests of highway safety in Haslett Avenue East. However, there appears to be a typo in the daylight hours value in the Council's suggested condition 1, because it is inconsistent with condition 2 of the previous consent, the highway authority's response, and the specification on plan 3832a, so the suggested daylight hours value has been amended.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, the appeal should be allowed.

J Reid

INSPECTOR