



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2023 by A Coombes MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/Z/23/3326686

Carshop, Admiralty Way, Camberley GU15 3DT

- 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 Mr Paul Hallam (Edge P S Ltd) against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
- The application Ref 23/0312/ADV, dated 24 March 2023 was refused by notice dated 30 June 2023.
- The advertisements proposed are: Sign A - illuminated 'Directional' pylon; Sign B - non illuminated 'Entrance' sign; Sign C - Non illuminated flag sign; Sign D - internally illuminated 'Service drive-in' letters; Sign E - internally illuminated flex face sign; Sign F - non illuminated door surround; Sign G - non illuminated 'carshop' sign; Sign H - illuminated '1000s of cars' sign; Sign I - illuminated 'lowest price' sign; Sign J - internally illuminated flex face sign; Sign K - illuminated '1000s of cars' sign; Sign L - internally illuminated flex face sign.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it related to advertisements Sign C - Non illuminated flag sign, Sign E - internally illuminated flex face sign, Sign J - internally illuminated flex face sign and Sign L - internally illuminated flex face sign. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to advertisements Sign A - illuminated 'Directional' pylon, Sign B - non illuminated 'Entrance' sign, Sign D - internally illuminated 'Service drive-in' letters, Sign F - non illuminated door surround, Sign G - non illuminated 'carshop' sign, Sign H - illuminated '1000s of cars' sign, Sign I - illuminated 'lowest price' sign and Sign K - illuminated '1000s of cars' sign at Carshop, Admiralty Way, Camberley GU15 3DT in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/0312/ADV, and express consent granted for their display. 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 advertisements labelled Sign A and Sign D permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 110 candela.
 - 2) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisements labelled Sign H, Sign I and Sign K permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 250 candela.
 - 3) The advertisements permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated with static illumination.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) on 19 December 2023. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a relevant factor, in this instance, the issues most relevant to this advertisement appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
4. The control of advertisements is exercisable only with respect to public safety and amenity. Regulation 3 states that powers in this regard shall be exercised taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

Main Issue

5. Neither the Council nor any other party has raised any objection to the proposal in relation to public safety. From the evidence before me, and my observations on site, I see no reason to disagree. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposed scheme on amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The Framework sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, and that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
7. The appeal site is a large commercial building within a predominantly commercial area. The Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) identifies it as part of the Industrial Estate and Infrastructure character area, characterised by flat, low level, hard urban landscapes. The SPD identifies unattractive signage as a negative feature of the character area.
8. The appeal site and building occupy a prominent corner position, just off the Meadows roundabout. It is highly visible from the public realm and nearby main roads. Although it is close to the Blackwater Valley path, vegetation largely screens the building from view from that route.
9. Signs J, E and L would be set within panels of the building on three different elevations. They would occupy a large proportion of the respective panels, and would be highly prominent and dominant features on an otherwise simple building. Consequently, they would dominate the elevations and appear disproportionately large.
10. In correspondence with the Council, the appellant stated their intention to use halo illumination for these signs. However, the submitted plans and application form refer to the signs being internally illuminated using white LEDs. I can only make a recommendation based on the plans that are before me and were before the Council at the time of its decision. There are no amended plans before me to show halo illumination, and without the details, I cannot consider that option.
11. In the absence of any evidence showing otherwise, such as detailed technical drawings, it appears that the entirety of these very large advertisements would

- be illuminated with LEDs. The extent of illumination, combined with their scale, would be detrimental to the appearance of the building and surrounding area, and therefore to amenity.
12. The three flag signs (Sign C) would be close to the junction of the A331 and London Road. Due to their height, they would be a prominent feature at the junction. There are already a number of vertical structures in this area, including streetlights, and the number and height of the flag signs would introduce unacceptable visual clutter. They would also be seen in combination with Sign L, which would further add to the visual prominence of the site.
 13. Signs A, B, D, F, G, H, I and K would not dominate the host building, given their size and scale and relatively small proportions in relation to the building. However, when considering the cumulative impact of the proposed signage and the level of illumination, cumulatively, the scheme would lead to a cluttered and visually intrusive appearance from the public realm. Therefore, the proposed scheme would harm amenity.
 14. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposal follows company branding guidelines, it has not been demonstrated that advertisements of this number, scale and degree of illumination are the only option for the company. Therefore, this carries very little weight and does not outweigh the harm I have identified.
 15. There are many other examples of commercial advertising nearby, including some large signs and some buildings with signage on multiple elevations. However, I did not see any buildings with signage comparable in scale, number and illumination to what is proposed in this appeal. The Big Yellow Self Storage site and building opposite are comparable in size to the site. However, whilst this unit had illuminated panels on most of the facades, the panels were small in relation to the relevant elevation. Consequently, these examples are materially different to the proposed scheme, and do not justify the harm that would result from this proposal.
 16. I have taken into account policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) Core Strategy Development Management Policies, adopted 2012. I have also had regard to guiding principle IE2 of the SPD. Both this policy and the SPD principle refer to development however, and advertisements are not development for the purposes of planning legislation, so they are not directly relevant to the proposal before me. Nevertheless, there would be conflict with the elements which seek good design.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Coombes

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and agree with the reasoning and recommendation set out above. Signs C, E, J and L would harm the amenity of the area and are unacceptable. I also agree that the advertising scheme as a whole would harm amenity due to the

cumulative effect of the number and scale of the advertisements and the extent of illumination. However, I agree with my representative that, individually, Signs A, B, D, F, G, H, I and K would not harm amenity or public safety. Furthermore, I consider that the cumulative effect of this group of advertisements only, without Signs C, E J and L, would be limited and would not harm amenity. Consequently, as these are advertisements are clearly severable from the others proposed, I can issue a split decision and allow the appeal insofar as it relates to these advertisements only.

19. The standard conditions will apply to the advertisements allowed. For those that would be illuminated, it is necessary in the interests of amenity and public safety to limit them to static illumination only, and to the luminance level set out on the application form.
20. On that basis the appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to Signs C, E, J and L and allowed insofar as it relates to Signs A, B, D, F, G, H, I and K, subject to the conditions listed above.

L McKay

INSPECTOR