



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2024

by H Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J2373/Z/23/3334934

Houndshill Shopping Centre, Albert Road, Blackpool

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Frasers Group against the decision of Blackpool Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/0766.
 - The advertisement proposed is 3 non-illuminated vinyl signs (signs 3 and 4 on submitted plan ref CPS 20 017 206 B; and 4 and 6 on submitted plan ref CPS 20 017 207 A).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the 3 non-illuminated vinyl signs (signs 3 and 4 on submitted plan ref CPS 20 017 206 B; and 4 and 6 on submitted plan ref CPS 20 017 207 A) at Houndshill Shopping Centre, Albert Road, Blackpool in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/0766. 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 2007 Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development above from the application form. I note that there is a discrepancy in the address and post code on the decision notice and appeal form. I have therefore omitted the post code above. This does not however affect the accuracy of address of the proposal.
3. At my site visit I saw that there were advertisements at the site. However, signs 3 and 6 differ from those shown on the plans. I have determined the appeal based on the plans before me.
4. The Council has drawn my attention to Development Plan policies which they consider relevant to this appeal. However, powers under the Regulations¹ to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reiterate this approach. I have therefore taken them into account insofar as they are relevant to those matters.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended)

Main Issue

5. The Council does not object to the proposals on public safety grounds. There is no compelling reason for me to disagree.
6. The main issue is therefore the effect of the advertisements on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

7. The application site is on the corner of Albert Road and Coronation Street and forms the rear of the Houndshill Shopping Centre, in mixed commercial and residential area on the edge of the Town Centre.
8. Whilst amenity is not defined exhaustively within the Regulations, it does indicate that relevant factors include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. The PPG explains that in assessing amenity, local characteristics should be considered. Such as if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, it should be considered whether the advertisement is in scale keeping with these features.
9. The advertisements subject of this appeal cover the existing doors and side panels of the entrance turret at the corner of the shopping centre. This entrance to the store and shopping centre beyond is no longer in use due to a change in retailer and internal layout of the store. The advertisements are designed to prevent public views of a disused staircase. The outline of the doors remain visible, maintaining the original design of the building.
10. The size and design of the signs, given the scale of the host building, would be in keeping with the commercial use of the area. In the main they replicate the size, scale and colour of the surrounding brickwork and do not add to the visual clutter in the area.
11. Accordingly, the 3 non-illuminated vinyl signs would not result in unacceptable harm to the visual amenity of the area. As such, they would not conflict with guidance in the Framework and Policy CS7 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, Policy DM24 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies and guidance in the Signage Supplementary Planning Document which, as far as they are material to the main issue, collectively seek to ensure proposals preserve the character and amenity of the area.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site is near to The Winter Gardens which is designated as Grade II* listed building². I have therefore had regard to the statutory duty referred to in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. However, given the distance from and physical relationship of the proposal to this designated asset as well as other advertisements closer to it, its setting would not be harmed and the proposal would not detract from it.
13. The Council refers to breaches of conditions attached to the original planning permission for the shopping centre. Advertisement consent is separate to

² List Entry Number 1072007

planning permission and therefore the issue of the legibility of the building is not before me.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed and express consent granted subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

H Senior

INSPECTOR