



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2024

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19TH June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/Z/24/3339036

Oversley Mill Services, Alcester Bypass, Arrow, Warwickshire, B49 6PQ

- 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 Nick Heard on behalf of Costa Coffee Ltd against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/02614/ADV, dated 28 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 January 2024.
 - The advertisement proposed is 5 x Fascia Sign 7 x Monument Sign, 1 x mesh banner.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the application process 2 banner signs were removed from the proposal. The description of development in the banner heading above reflects that change and is consistent with the description of development in the decision notice.
3. The Council issued a split decision in which express advertisement consent was granted for the proposed signs except for a 5m double sided pole sign referenced drawing number 26408 Item G. For the avoidance of doubt, my consideration relates only to this sign which would be 2m wide with internally illuminated lettering.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site relates to a service station at Oversley Mill Roundabout on the junction of the A46 and the A435. The service station includes a petrol filling station and shop, a drive through restaurant and a hotel.
6. There were six signs at the entrance to the service station at the time of my visit including 2 totem signs either side of the entrance. The tallest one, on the northern side of the entrance, includes advertisements for the service station, shop, Costa Express and a car wash. Next to it there is an approximately 1m high model of a cup advertising Costa Express, followed by a free standing advertisement for the National Lottery and then a banner advertisement for Costa Coffee attached to a metal fence. On the opposite, south, side of the

entrance, on a grassed area set back from the road behind a post and rail fence, the second totem sign contains advertisements for the restaurant and hotel, next to which is an approximately 1m high sign for the restaurant. Both totem signs are visible from the A46 approaching the service station in either direction. Another totem sign for the restaurant is located within the service station area on a grass verge opposite the restaurant, set back and below, but visible from, the A46 approaching the service station from the south.

7. Accepting that signage is appropriate at the entrance to a service station, the six signs described above, 3 of which advertise Costa, vary in size and design and already appear somewhat cluttered. The proposed sign for the drive thru Costa Coffee would be 2m x 1.7m raised on a pole with an overall height of 5m. It would be located next to the existing totem sign on the south side of the entrance. Even if some of the other advertisements were to be removed, the proposed sign would appear visually discordant and lead to a cluttered appearance because of its height, difference in design and close proximity to the existing sign and would therefore harm the visual amenity of the area despite its commercial context.
8. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, in accordance with the Regulations¹. The proposed advert would conflict with Policy CS.9 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 (2016) and H3 of the Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Document (2019) which require free standing adverts to be visually harmonious and not harmful to amenity. This policy and guidance are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. The appellant has argued that the sign is necessary because the drive thru café would be hidden behind the filling station buildings. However, the existing signage for the Costa Express already draws attention to the business. Furthermore, I see no reason why a further advertisement could not be accommodated on the totem south of the entrance, as is the case for the hotel and restaurant, as suggested by the Council. I note the fall-back position, referred to by the appellant, of a non-illuminated version of the sign on a shorter pole. However, there is no evidence that it would be installed in the event of this appeal being dismissed, and therefore is a matter of negligible weight. Furthermore, a shorter non illuminated sign would be slightly less obtrusive and therefore less harmful to the visual amenity of the area than the proposal.
10. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR

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