



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2024

by K Williams MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D2510/Z/23/3330947

103-111 ROMAN BANK, SKEGNESS, PE25 2SW

- 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 Mr Graeme Hughes, Alight Media against the decision of East Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref is S/153/01552/23.
 - The advertisement proposed is the erection and display of a freestanding poster display unit measuring 6 x 3 metres (standard 48 sheet industry size) with internal illumination (LED lights) for the display of static poster advertisements.
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Decision

Preliminary Matters

1. The description of development and the site address in the heading above has been taken from the appeal form and Council's decision notice. I have used these in the interests of clarity.
2. The Council has referred to Policy SP10 of the East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy adopted July 2018 (the Local Plan) and the objectives of D1 of the Referendum Version Skegness Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031 (the SNP) within their reason for refusal. The Regulations to control advertisements require that decisions be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. As such, the planning policies cited cannot, therefore, be decisive.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within an open retail forecourt along Roman Bank, a relatively busy thoroughfare close to the town centre of Skegness. There are numerous pockets of low-key commercial businesses and residential buildings lining this road. However, opposite the appeal site are a row residential homes of uniform appearance set behind a grass verge and street trees. The character and appearance of this stretch of road opposite the appeal site is significantly different to the overall character of Roman Bank and has positive influence on the character and appearance of the area.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited

and designed. The Planning Practice Guidance states that in assessing amenity, regard should be had to the local characteristics of the neighbourhood¹.

6. The proposed free standing structure would be high and wide and would be of a substantial size. Positioned at right angles to Roman Bank it would be highly visible to oncoming traffic and would also be seen in the context of the trees across the road and commercial buildings. However, the orientation would be at odds with the majority buildings which directly face Roman Bank.
7. It would also be positioned next to a single storey flat roof building, separating it from the end gable of a two-storey commercial property. The overall height of the structure would project well above the single storey roof. This would create an uneasy relationship. The freestanding poster display would appear as an isolated bulky and inharmonious feature in the street scene.
8. It is noted that the Council approved an existing digital sign of similar scale and appearance opposite the aforementioned homes and street trees. However, unlike the appeal before me that digital advertisement is not free standing and the Council's officer report suggests part of the justification was that sign sought to replace two existing billboards. Unlike that proposal, I have no evidence that this is a replacement advertisement.
9. The timing and extent of the illumination can be controlled by conditions and I am not convinced that it would harm the living conditions and therefore the amenity of the residents within those homes. This is due to the orientation, distance and because those properties are slightly screened by rising verges to the road. There is also no concern raised regarding public safety.
10. However, the nature of a large, changing display designed to attract attention at street level would be markedly different from nearby streetlamps, traffic lights and signage on the commercial buildings. Moreover, the proposal would lead to a concentration of this different form of advertising in this area. As such the provision of two large digital screens so close to each other would be strident, imposing and dominating in a short stretch of road, particularly given the understated commercial streetscene and the more suburban residential character opposite.
11. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material. Bringing the above threads together, I conclude that the advertisement has a harmful effect upon amenity. The advertisement would therefore not accord with Policy SP10 of the Local Plan and D1 of the SNP. Together these require, amongst other things, that development reflects and positively contributes towards the local character of the surrounding area. For similar reasons, the proposal would not accord with the provisions of paragraph 141 of the Framework.

Conclusion

12. I have had regard to all other matters raised but none outweigh the conclusions I have reached and I dismiss the appeal.

K Williams

INSPECTOR

¹ Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306