
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2025

by **J Pearce MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/Z/24/3349009

**Roundabout at the junction of Aisher Way and Blackmead, Riverhead, Kent
TN13 2QU**

- 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 Mrs Woodward of Marketing Force Limited against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00996/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of 4 x free standing, non-illuminated fascia advertisement boards.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's reasons for refusal refer to the proposal conflicting with its development plan. However, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, as appropriate to each case. Therefore, although I have taken the development plan into account insofar as it is relevant, and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), they have not been decisive considerations in my determination of this appeal.
3. The revised Framework was published in December 2024. However, the changes to national policy arising from it are not relevant to the areas of dispute for this appeal. Accordingly, I have not sought comments from the main parties about this matter.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed advertisements on:
 - the visual amenity of the area; and
 - public safety.

Reasons

Visual amenity

5. The appeal site comprises a roundabout forming the junction of Aisher Way and Blackmead. The junction also provides vehicular access to a supermarket and petrol station, including a separate access for deliveries. A pedestrian crossing

and a bus stop are located on the approach to the roundabout from London Road. The roundabout includes five sets of directional signs comprising two rectangular black and white chevron signs either side of a blue, externally illuminated circular sign. The signs are unevenly spaced around the edge of the roundabout, with a gap facing towards Blackmead.

6. The site is located within an urban setting between a large supermarket and its associated car park, and a residential estate accessed from Blackmead and Aisher Way. Aside from the highway signs, existing signage in the area is limited, but includes banner signs and a totem-style sign close to the vehicular access to the supermarket.
7. The proposal is for four rectangular signs positioned close to the existing directional signs. The advertisements would be positioned between the directional signs, including two in the larger gap facing Blackmead. The proposed advertising boards would increase the number of signs on the roundabout, including occupying the spaces between the existing signs. The proposal would lead to a harmful proliferation of signage on a roundabout of limited size. The advertising boards would therefore crowd the roundabout, which would appear unduly cluttered.
8. The signs would not be of a substantial size and their commercial character would not be wholly alien to the area, which is not covered by any local or national designation and is not close to any designated heritage assets. Nevertheless, the proposed signs would appear incongruous given the limited amount of commercial signage in the area. Consequently, the proposal would be intrusive and would have detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the area.
9. I have taken into account Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015 (SADMP) and Policy SP1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 (CS), which seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the signs would harm visual amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Public safety

10. The roundabout is served by three roads, in addition to provide access to the supermarket and its delivery area. A pedestrian crossing is located at Aisher Way leading on the approach from London Road. The existing sets of signs within the site are elevated and highly prominent for vehicles approaching the roundabout.
11. The proposed advertising boards would be positioned close to the edge of the roundabout between the existing directional signage. While the signs would be prominent, their smaller size in relation to the highway signs would ensure that they would not unduly distract drivers. Moreover, their offset position would not hinder views towards the existing directional signs.
12. The pedestrian crossings close to the roundabout are hazardous features for users of the highway. Nonetheless, the signs would not be of a size and position that would distract users of the highway to the detriment of the safety of pedestrians using the crossings. Accordingly, the signs would not have an adverse effect on public safety.

13. I therefore conclude that the advertisements would not have an unacceptable effect on highway safety. I have taken into account Policy EN1 of the SADMP, which seeks to ensure satisfactory means of access and so is material in this case. Given I have concluded that the signs would not harm public safety, the proposal accords with this policy.

Other Matter

14. The appellant has referred to roundabouts where advertisements have been permitted. Nevertheless, without precise details of such advertisements, including the specific site characteristics, I cannot be certain that the circumstances are comparable to the proposal before me. In any case, every proposal must be considered on its own individual merits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the advertisements would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

J Pearce

INSPECTOR