
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2025

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/Z/24/3349029

Roundabout at junction of A20 London Road and Dartford Road, Farningham DA4 0DX

- 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 Ms J Woodward against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/01002/ADV.
 - The proposal is for display of 4 x freestanding, non-illuminated fascia advertising boards.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 4 x free-standing, non-illuminated fascia advertising boards on the roundabout at the junction of A20 London Road and Dartford Road, Farningham DA4 0DX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. 24/01002/ADV. 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 and the following additional condition:

1) The information included on each board shall be the same for each advertisement and limited to:

- Company logo
- Company name (if not on logo)
- One contact piece of information.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the determination of this appeal are the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area and public safety.

Reasons

Visual amenity

3. Amenity is not defined within the Regulations, nonetheless relevant factors include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. In assessing amenity, it is reasonable to consider characteristics of the neighbourhood.
4. The appeal site comprises a large roundabout with four spurs, it has tall trees and planting in its centre with chevron and arrow signage around its circumference. In the vicinity of the site, the highway and its infrastructure has a dominant presence with wide carriageways, directional signs, telegraph poles and lighting columns all in close proximity. There are also a number of signs and advertisements largely associated with a petrol station and car dealership just beyond this site towards the southwest. The M20 passes nearby with a bridge over the A225. Therefore, whilst the wider area may be of a rural nature, the immediate surrounds have a more developed and urban presence.

5. The scheme proposes four signs which would be relatively modest in their scale and non-illuminated. The signs would be spread out around the outer edge of the roundabout, broadly opposite each spur road, and this spacing would not result in an overly cluttered appearance or obscure the backdrop of central vegetation. They would be clearly seen as part of the existing highway feature and would be visually appropriate in this context.
6. The site lies within the Green Belt, the essential characteristics of which include its openness, and this has both visual and spatial aspects. It is also within the Kent Downs National Landscape, and I appreciate the statutory duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. In these respects, although the advertisements are clearly designed to be seen, their overall volume and extent would be relatively small. As such, to my mind they would not be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and would conserve the natural beauty of the National Landscape .
7. Reference has been made to a previous appeal at this site (PINS ref. APP/G2245/H/08/2089562); I have not been given any further information in this regard and am not aware of the precise circumstances pertaining to this case. Accordingly, I accrue such evidence limited weight.
8. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan insofar as they are applicable. Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocation and Development Management Plan February 2015 (ADMP) seeks high quality design that responds positively to the character of a locality. As such, this is deemed a material consideration insofar as it is relevant to visual amenity.
9. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would not have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. The scheme would meet with the objectives of the above policy.

Public safety

10. I observed during my site visit that the junction and roads approaching the roundabout have good visibility, and any traffic nearing the location travels at appropriate speed and with caution.
11. The Planning Practice Guidance states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, with those proposed at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. Furthermore, it advises that the main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal can also pose a risk to highway safety.
12. The adverts would be of modest scale, and positioned such that they do not unduly obstruct local road signs. There is no illumination to cause a distraction or draw the eye, and as such there would be no adverse visual confusion against the backdrop of the junction.
13. I am of the view that it would be appropriate to display a company name with logo and contact details, which can be secured via condition to limit the amount of information presented. Consequently, there would be no significant risk to pedestrians and road users as they approach this section of the highway.
14. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisements would not have a harmful effect on the public safety in the area. The scheme would meet with the objectives of Policy EN1 of the ADMP and Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Local Development Framework Core Strategy (February 2011).

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I find that the appeal should be allowed subject to the five standard conditions. In addition, a condition restricting information on the advertisements would be required in the interests of public safety, as mentioned previously.

C Hall

INSPECTOR