



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2025

by D R Kay BA Dip.Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1835/Z/24/3352483

BYD (Bristol St Motors), Cosgrove Close, Blackpole, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR3 8UA

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Vertu Motors plc against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref: 24/00464/ADV (Split Decision), dated 5 July 2024, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2024.
 - The development proposed is '1off internally illuminated Totem sign'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for an internally illuminated Totem sign' at BYD (Bristol St Motors), Cosgrove Close, Blackpole, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR3 8UA, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 24/00464/ADV. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

2. The display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system, which is set out in the Regulations. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
3. Therefore, the appeal has been considered with regards to the above and to the relevant policies of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) (SWDP), insofar as they are relevant to amenity or public safety.
4. The Council issued a split decision allowing an internally illuminated fascia sign but refusing a totem sign. It is only the latter that is the subject of this appeal. I noted at my site visit that it had been erected. Furthermore, the appellant confirmed that the proposal does not seek approval for the re-location of an existing internally illuminated 'Ford' Totem sign. Therefore, notwithstanding the Council's reference to this element (which I also observed was in situ at my site visit), I have confined my determination to the details shown on the application form and drawings for the Totem sign sought.

Main Issue

5. The Council does not object to the proposed advertisement on grounds of public safety. Therefore, the main issue for consideration is the effect of the proposals on the amenity of the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is located on part of a vehicle sales garage situated on Blackpole Road (B4850) opposite the junction with Cotswold Way (B4639), though it takes its vehicular access from Cosgrove Close to the rear of the site. There are a significant number of trees along Blackpole Road in the locality, forming a tree belt, though the vehicle sales garage and appeal site is situated in a clear gap within this. A further vehicle sales garage is situated opposite on the corner of Blackpole Road and Cotswold Way, which has its own signage Totems, giving the immediate locality a character of retail sales at this major traffic-light controlled junction.
7. To the north of the appeal site is the 'Worcester and Birmingham Canal Conservation Area No.12' (CA), which follows the linear route of the canal. The canal is set at a lower level than Blackpole Road, which travels over the canal at the northern-eastern corner of the appeal site via a bridge. The canal is set apart from the appeal site owing to the topography and established hedgerows. It only becomes visible when travelling over the bridge, and there is little intervisibility with the appeal site.
8. The appeal proposal replaces a previous 'Ford' Totem sign with a new 'BYD' Totem sign at the same location, making use of the existing foundation base. The proposed sign is the same height, width and depth as the former, and is in similar materials. However, the darker grey colour means it is more visually recessive. Internal illumination is restrained and limited to the three letters of the name in white and a red band to its side elevations. This generally accords with policy SWDP21 of the SWDP which states that illuminated signage will only be permitted where lighting is unobtrusive.
9. As a result of the proposal being similar in location, size and materials as the previous sign, but finished in more muted colours, the impact of the sign is visually less prominent by comparison. Hence, I cannot agree that it would exacerbate clutter in the street scene. Furthermore, the separation distance and intervening landscape features with the CA mean that it would not detract from its setting. My finding is reinforced by the similar conclusions of the Council's conservation officer.
10. I therefore find that the proposed Totem sign would have no harmful impact on the visual amenity of the street scene, nor on the setting of the adjacent CA. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

11. The Regulations impose 5 standard conditions on express advert consents, and so there is no need to repeat these in my decision. No other conditions have been suggested by the parties, and I see no reason to impose any further restriction based on the evidence before me.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal proposals would not result in harm to the amenity of the area. Therefore, the appeal should be allowed.

D R Kay

INSPECTOR