



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 April 2025

by **D R Kay BA Dip.Arch RIBA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3360395

Hearsall Baptist Church, Hearsall Baptist Church Hall, Queensland Ave, Coventry CV5 8FE

- 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 Tauna-Shay Bonsu on behalf of Marpe Assembly of All Nations Church against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/0001901/ADV.
 - The advertisement development is Installation of exterior 4no. LED illuminated fascia signs and 1 x hanging sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for internally illuminated signage at Hearsall Baptist Church, Hearsall Baptist Church Hall, Queensland Avenue, Coventry CV5 8FE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2024/0001901/ADV.
2. 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, together with additional conditions relating to level of illuminance and hours of illumination identified in the schedule of conditions.

Preliminary Matters

3. The display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system, which is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. Therefore, the appeal has been considered with regards to the above and to the relevant policies of the Coventry City Council Local Plan 2017 (the Local Plan), insofar as they are relevant to amenity or public safety.
4. The description of development in the application form is extensive and detailed. Therefore, for conciseness, I have used the description of development from the Councils decision notice, which does not alter the intent of the application form.
5. At the time of my site visit, all the signs which are the subject of the appeal were in place on the building. I have therefore determined the appeal based on this being retrospective approval of development.

Main Issue

6. 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

7. The appeal site is situated within a predominantly residential area and consists of two distinct elements of buildings, which together form the Marpe Assembly of All Nations Church (formerly the Hearsall Baptist Church). The first building is the church, which is of mid-century design, is constructed from brick to the main section with a stone gabled entrance vestibule. This building is situated with its entrance on the B4107 Queensland Avenue, close to the busy major road junction of the B4107 with the B4101 Hearsall Common, which is a multi-laned, 4-way junction and is controlled by traffic lights.
8. The second building was constructed earlier, the foundation stone indicating 1928, and is also constructed from brick, with contrasting brick detailing and painted stone/render banding details. This building is the church hall and community centre, which is situated approximately 20m to the north of the church building and which also has its entrance on Queensland Avenue. There is a single-storey link which connects the two buildings, together with a car park for the church and community centre users, which separates the two buildings, and which takes its vehicular access from Queensland Avenue, approximately 20m north of the busy junction. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with the open area of Hearsall Common to the south of the church, either side of the B4101.
9. The appeal proposal takes the form of four separate distinct signs of differing designs and sizes, two being located on each of the two building elements. They are constructed from aluminium and Perspex; all are internally illuminated. The materials employed are common for internally illuminated signage of this nature. The application form identifies the level of illuminance of all the individual elements of the signs. The Council's Environmental Protection officer has raised no objection to the proposed illuminance levels.
10. Having viewed the signs in-situ, due to the proximity of the church to the busy controlled junction, the sign on the south facing gable of the church vestibule needs to be sufficiently large and clear to identify the building to users of the highway network, giving visitors to the appeal property clear direction to ensure highway safety. The sign is not overly large and incongruous in the context of the size of the building, and I therefore find this sign to be appropriate for its function and is acceptable.
11. The sign on the gable of the church above the entrance vestibule is appropriately sized and positioned such that it is not out of context and scale with the building, or detrimental to the area. I therefore find this sign to be acceptable.
12. The double-sided projecting sign mounted at 90 degrees to the principal elevation of the church hall is positioned at around 3m from ground level and provides signage for people travelling either north or south on Queensland Avenue. The Council regard this sign as overly large and obtrusive due to the excessive projection beyond the building. However, I find the size of the sign to be consistent with other such signage in common use and in scale to the size of building on

which it is located. The mounting bracket positions the sign approximately 100mm from the elevation, whilst the format of the bracket also maintains visibility between the circular sign and the wall from which it is mounted, allowing the details of brickwork to remain visible. As a result, I find this projecting sign to be acceptable.

13. The fourth of the signs is located above the entrance to the church hall. This principal elevation of the building has four sets of double doors within it. Therefore, the need to provide clear signage to denote the doors providing entry to the building is understood. The sign provides clarity, both in daylight hours when it is not illuminated, and would do so in the hours of darkness. The sign does unfortunately obscure some of the striated plaster detailing around the glazed over-light above the doors.
14. However, no evidence is before me which identifies that the building is a listed building or is within a conservation area. I observed at my site visit that the windows to the building are not original, being white uPVC, and that the doors to all these openings are also not original and, in many cases, do not match with each other. The integrity of the building has therefore already been diminished and so the obscuring of some of the striated plaster detail around the glazed over-light is not unacceptable. The sign above the entrance is not overly large, given the scale of the building on which it is positioned, and as a result, is not harmful to the appearance of the building or the surrounding area and is therefore acceptable.
15. I find that the appeal signage would have no harmful impact on the visual amenity of the host buildings and the street scene. I have taken into account policy DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan 2017 which seeks to protect amenity and so is material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal does not harm amenity, the proposal does not conflict with this policy.

Other Matters

16. I note the appellants' statement regarding racial and religiously motivated issues experienced by the organisation. I have therefore, given due regard to the public sector equality duty for persons with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and have attributed some weight to this matter. Therefore, taken alongside the lack of conflict I have found with the Local Plan otherwise, I am satisfied that allowing the appeal would be a proportionate response in this regard.
17. Representations were made by surrounding residents during the consultation stage of the application. I have addressed some of these already in my decision. However, in relation to issues of noise from activities at the site, these are matters which would be controlled by environmental protection officers of the Council. Likewise, matters of illegal parking are matters for other authorities. In relation to the levels of illumination and timing of illumination, I have dealt with these by suitably worded conditions applied to the decision.

Conditions

18. The Regulations impose 5 standard conditions on express advert consents, and so there is no need to repeat these in my decision. In addition, to limit the potential for nuisance to surrounding residents I have applied Condition 1 to ensure the level of illuminance of the signage is controlled to acceptable levels and Condition 2 to restrict the times of illumination.

Conclusion

19. 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

Schedule of Conditions

- 1 The intensity of the illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent shall be no greater than within that recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in its Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG 05) Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (or its equivalent in a replacement Guide).
- 2 The advertisements permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates.

***** End of Schedule *****