



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

by **G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/Z/25/3365316

Babbage Way, Exeter Science Park, Clyst Honiton, Devon EX5 2FN

- 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 Tony Clarke on behalf of Zeal Hotel (Exeter) Ltd against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/1552/ADV.
 - The advertisements are two backlit aluminium framed wall mounted box signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of two backlit aluminium framed wall mounted box signs at Babbage Way, Exeter Science Park, Clyst Honiton, Devon EX5 2FN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/1552/ADV. The consent is for 5 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 2 conditions:
 - (i) during the hours of darkness (from dusk – dawn), the display luminance of the two consented signs shall be no greater than 200 cd/m².
 - (ii) During those times when the hotel restaurant is closed to members of the public the restaurant sign, hereby consented, shall not be illuminated.

Preliminary and procedural matters

2. The appellants submitted a single application directed to obtaining consent for the display of several advertisements associated with the recently built Zeal Hotel and its restaurant. The Council issued a split decision wherein it permitted most but refused the two signs subject of appeal. The two signs are already displayed.
3. Reference has been made to the *National Planning Policy Framework*. Its guidance underlines the fact that the powers under the current Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In this context, having regard to the main issue, the development plan policies referred to have been treated as material considerations.
4. The Council has not objected on the grounds of public safety, and I have no reason to disagree with its assessment on this aspect.

Main Issue

5. This is the effect of the two advertisements on amenity.

Reasons

6. Both signs are located alongside one another affixed to a retaining wall virtually at the junction of Honiton Road and Babbage Way at the entrance to the Exeter Science Park. The signs serve the new hotel and its restaurant and they back onto an area of landscaping, which surrounds the hotel. The hotel is a large building, of a contemporary appearance and sits well within its context of relatively modern buildings.
7. The Council considers the signs cause clutter, are unsympathetically designed having regard to existing signage in the area, are of an unacceptable scale and are composed of inappropriate materials. The Council says that the signs are highly visible in the public realm in one sentence of the officer report, but this observation is contradicted in the next where it says, as I saw, that they are obscured from view when approaching from the west along Honiton Road. They are also obscured from view when approaching from the east along the same road.
8. The Council would see advantages in the signs being amalgamated, but I do not consider that the two signs have harmed amenity. Firstly, the signs are sited at a low level and their visual influence is restricted, being largely limited to the junction and parts of Babbage Way. Secondly, the signs sit acceptably in their visual context, are wholly and acceptably subservient to the adjacent hotel building and do not harm the visual amenities of their surroundings including part of the Science Park. Lastly, their design and materials are well suited to their surroundings.
9. I therefore conclude that the appeal shall succeed.

Other matters

10. The Council does not suggest any conditions other than the five standard conditions are required. However, I note that the Council's split decision notice lists two additional conditions in respect of some of the consented signs in respect of illumination. I shall impose variations of these two conditions firstly so to avoid glare at a highway junction and in the interests of amenity and energy conservation.
11. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered but none outweighs the considerations that led me to my conclusions, and the appeal is therefore allowed.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR