



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2014

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25 March 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/H/13/2207444

Co-op Welcome, 67 – 71 Portland Road, Hove, BN3 5DQ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Co-Operative Group Ltd against the decision of Brighton and Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2013/02130, dated 24 June 2013, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2013.
 - The advertisements proposed include 1 x Fascia sign – externally illuminated by overhead trough light to front elevation, 1 x Fascia sign – externally illuminated by overhead trough light to side elevation and 1 x internally illuminated projection sign to front elevation.
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Preliminary matter

1. On 6 March 2014 the Planning Practice Guidance (planning guidance) was published by the Department for Communities & Local Government. In relation to this Appeal the planning guidance refers to the advertisement statement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which are addressed in this decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of each of the proposed advertisements on the character and appearance of the host building.

Reasons

4. The NPPF states that the Government attaches great weight to the design of the built environment and that proposals should respond to the local character and history of their surroundings. Paragraph 67 goes on to state that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the built environment.
5. Policy QD12 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 is broadly consistent with this. It allows for sensitively designed and located advertisements, which contribute to the visual amenity of the area. In assessing the suitability of an advertisement factors including size, colour, materials, location and overall impact are taken into account. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 07 – *Advertisements* (SPD) further advises that a well designed

- fascia sign can complete the image of an attractive shop front. The Council will expect any new fascia sign to be contained within the dimensions of the existing fascia.
6. The Appeal property comprises three smaller properties at the western end of a two storey rendered Victorian terrace which is predominantly residential in character and appearance. The western section of the terrace has shop fronts at ground floor level and canted bay sash windows at first floor level. The eastern half of the terrace has two storey canted bay sash windows and modest sized front gardens. The individual properties also have prominent dormer windows in their front roof slopes. Collectively these features make a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the terrace and the street scene as a whole.
 7. The Appeal property occupies a prominent position adjacent to the junction of Portland Road and Westbourne Street, which are part commercial and part residential in character. The commercial units along Portland Road predominantly have modest width shopfronts, which restricts the width of their fascia signs. In addition, the vast majority of fascia signs along Portland Road are sited well below the first floor window sills and overall are modest in width, depth and form. They reflect the modest scale of the properties and the local retail character and appearance of Portland Road, as well ensuring that the Victorian character of the buildings dominates the street scene.
 8. It is noted from the photographs submitted that at some time the property likely had fascia signs with a similar height to the proposed fascia signs. However, no details of their materials, colour and detailing is provided and so it is not possible to assess the impact the signage had on the host building. Irrespective of this, the scheme needs to be assessed on its individual merits and in light of the prevailing planning policies.
 9. The proposed advertisements have already been installed. The fascia signs fill the whole of the gap between the shop windows and the sills of the first floor windows. Not only are the signs uncharacteristically deep they stretch across the full width of the original three properties and the full depth of the western flank wall of the building. Although the colour of the proposed lettering is discrete, the main central lettering on the proposed front fascia sign is uncharacteristically large, bold and dominant. More importantly, the fascia signs due to their size and bright lime green colour completely dominate the host property and the immediate street scene.
 10. The situation is exacerbated by the proposed projecting box sign, which adds to the depth of the fascia when viewed from the west and increases the dominance of the fascia sign within Portland Road. Similarly the proposed external strip lights add to the dominance of the signage.
 11. Due to the bold and uniform design of the signs, together with the width and depth of the host property, the resultant signage would not appear cluttered. However, collectively the signage to the side and front of the premises would appear unduly bulky, prominent and totally out of keeping with the modest scale of the host property, the terrace and the street scene in general. The signage would materially detract from the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings. The visual harm that would be caused by the signage would outweigh the benefits of covering up the upper part and flashing of a former fascia board.

12. Finally, the Appellant's comments regarding the corporate identity of the company and the impact the company is trying to make in an area where retail units are closing down and losing business are noted. However, it is assumed that there is a need for every advertisement, consequently the regulations stipulate that only amenity and public safety arguments can be considered.
13. I conclude that the proposed fascia signs and projecting box sign materially and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the Appeal property. As such they conflict with policy QD12 of the Local Plan, the advice in the SPD and the NPPF.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR