
2020/0213

Mr G Hughes

Replacement of existing wall mounted advertisement board with internally illuminated digital advertisement board

FG Tyres and Garage, Race Street, Barnsley, S70 1BY

Site Location & Description

FG Tyres occupies a unit within the former Gaimster building which is located on Race Street and adjacent to Town End roundabout, a main gateway into the Town Centre. Town End roundabout is a main gyratory junction linking several entry and exit points to the wider borough and the M1 Motorway.

The building is constructed from metal cladding and brickwork and is located adjacent to the back edge of the footway, with the rear of the building facing towards the Town End roundabout with the footway and a protective metal barrier separating the building from the highway.

The rear of the building benefits from 2no banner signs identifying the premises which have been previously approved.

Planning History

2014/0223 - Display of illuminated and non illuminated signage to building approved May 2014. The application proposed various signage to the southern front elevation, the entrance to the unit and to the northern rear elevation facing towards Town End roundabout.

Proposed Development

The applicant seeks permission for the installation of 1no.internally illuminated digital display advertisement board. The sign is to measure 3.4m by 6.4m at an approximate height of 2.5m above ground level and is to be installed on the gable wall of FG Tyres, facing towards Town End roundabout. The advertisements upon the panel are to be static (no moving images or flashing lights) and internally illuminated at 300cd/sqm at night in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers. The illuminance is to be controlled via light sensor and the brightness will adjust accordingly to outside factors, such as changes from sunrise to sunset. Whilst only static images will be displayed they will be capable of changing to display new adverts every 10 seconds.

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which are other material considerations.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved

unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Local Plan

The site is allocated as Town Centre Gateway Site for Public Open Space Improvement and is on the Local Strategic Highway Network within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and therefore the following policies are relevant

Policy GD1 General Development

Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making

Development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy BTC7 Gateways

Development on or next to the gateways identified on Inset Map 2 must:

- Create a strong distinctive visual gateway to the town centre and a sense of arrival;
- Be of high quality design and use the best quality materials;
- Be designed to welcome people into the town centre and create active street frontages;
- Not detract from important views or skylines;
- Include good pedestrian links through the site and to the town centre;
- Take the opportunity to create distinctive new landmark buildings;
- Improve public spaces in accordance with the Barnsley Town Centre Public Spaces Strategy; and
- Creating linkages to other areas adjacent to the town centre.

Policy T4 New Development and Transport Safety

New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

Policy POLL1 Pollution Control and Protection

Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result directly or indirectly in an increase in air, surface water, and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment.

SPDs

Advertisements

The SPD sets out the design principles that specifically apply to the consideration of planning applications for Advertisements

The aim of the system is to regulate advertisements in the interest of 'amenity' and 'public safety'. The main issues in determining an application will, therefore, usually be:

- The impact of the advertisement on the appearance of the site or building upon which it is displayed and upon the visual character of the area.
- The impact of the proposal upon the safety of pedestrians and vehicles.

Consultations

Highways DC – objections on highway safety grounds

Pollution Control – no objections

Ward Councillors – Cllr Kath Mitchell objects on highway safety grounds

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice posted adjacent to the site; one letter of objection has been received in relation to highway safety and the distraction the sign would cause.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The site is allocated as Town Centre Gateway Site for Public Open Space Improvement and is on the Local Strategic Highway Network within the Local Plan Policies map, where development on or next to, must be of a high quality design and create a strong distinctive visual gateway to the town centre.

The erection of signage or replacement signage is deemed acceptable in principle, however, consent will only be granted where the development is found to be appropriate in design and respectful of the character of the area and advertisements should not adversely impact on the amenity of local residents, undermine highway safety or result in an increase in light pollution.

Highway Safety

There is growing concern that roadside advertising presents a risk to driving safety due to driver distraction.

The proposed sign would be highly visibly from the busy Town End roundabout and there are serious concerns in relation to the possible driver distraction at a critical point on the highway network.

Town End roundabout is a very busy area with, as the applicant has stated, lots of vehicles using it daily. Peak times see traffic queuing to enter and exit the roundabout with pedestrian crossings to take account of. A digital sign, by its very nature, is there to divert attention which is in direct conflict with the need for full driver attention on the road at all times and could lead to very serious safety implications

Whilst it is difficult to quantify / assess this level of distraction, the aim of signs that contain illuminated changing images is to attract the attention of passers by, which in turn may distract drivers and be detrimental to driving safety. As such, prudence must be exercised in this instance and being mindful of the potential risk, the application is viewed unfavourably from a road safety perspective.

It is acknowledged that the authority has approved other digital signage within the borough, however the other sites are somewhat different, they are on single stretches of road, they are not located near complex junctions and the authority has ensured that there are no flashing sequences of advertisement. It is unlikely, in these instances that drivers will see more than one image when driving past, so in that respect, it's not too dissimilar to a static poster. Nevertheless each application is assessed on its own merits and in this instance the proposed location for a digital display advertisement in close proximity to a busy roundabout on the highway network is considered unacceptable.

It is considered that the proposed advertisement does not comply with policy in that it would adversely undermine highway safety due to its location facing towards Town End roundabout and as such the proposed advertisement fails to maintain safe, secure and convenient access and movement for highway users contrary to Local Plan Policy T4 - New development and Transport Safety.

Visual Amenity

SPD: Advertisements states in section 6.1 that 'signs on shops, business and commercial premises should be limited to that which is necessary to identify the premises. Advertisement should, therefore, have regard for the design, scale and proportions of the building or site on which they are displayed. The over provision or poor design of signs can give rise to a cluttered and aggressively commercial appearance which will have a damaging impact upon the visual character of an area.

The council is therefore unlikely to grant consent for '...advertisement hoardings, including poster panels and banners signs...'

As mentioned previously the site is allocated as a Town Centre Gateway Site for Public Open Space Improvement.

Section 16.37 of the Local Plan states that significant new developments in the town centre must improve the quality of the town centre's streetscape and public spaces for everyone's benefit. Public space improvements include such things as surfacing, street furniture, boundary treatments, paving, lighting, benches, litter bins, signage, and public art. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal would not be defined as a significant new development, it is a new development nonetheless in an area which has been identified in the recently adopted Local Plan for public space improvement and therefore the authority should resist development which would have conflict with the wider council strategy by improving the quality of routes into the town centre which are attractive and create a good impression for visitors to the town.

It is acknowledged that banner signs have been erected on the northern elevation of the site, however at the time of the original application, prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, it was determined that these were required in order to identify the premises, given that the front of the building and its access faces away from obvious highway.

It is also worth noting that a complaint was received several years ago in relation to signage on this building, advertising other businesses within the borough; this signage was deemed inappropriate, as it was advertising a company which did not provide services from the site.

Each application is based on its own merits and whilst it is acknowledged that the Authority has approved several digital advertising hoardings within the borough, these were replacement of existing poster and paste hoardings and not new advertisements. Based on the text within section 6.1 of the SPD, new hoardings in these locations would most likely be refused.

As mentioned previously the former Gaimster building is located at the junction of West Way & Racecommon Road, is adjacent to Town End roundabout, does not have any obvious architectural

merit and does benefit from some existing signage. However, this does not warrant the approval of a scheme which, as a general advertisement hoarding, would not identify the function or use of the premises and it would give rise to an aggressively commercial appearance in an important gateway route to the town centre and would therefore have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

Residential Amenity

The site is located at a major town centre gateway and there are limited residential properties within the vicinity of the site. Given that the application is for an illuminated screen providing a digital display similar to that of a television screen and not a direct light source and there has been no objection from Pollution Control. It is considered that the proposal would not cause any nuisance given that it is located on the strategic highway network served by street lighting.

As such, it is anticipated that there will be no detrimental effect from the new signage for local residents and it will not be prejudicial to the amenity of surrounding units, however, this does not warrant the approval of a scheme which would have a detrimental impact on highway safety and the character of the area and as is considered contrary to Local Plan policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making and the requirements of the Supplementary Planning Document - Advertisements

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed signage is considered contrary to the policies of the adopted Local Plan.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed advertisement would adversely undermine highway safety due to its location facing towards Town End roundabout and as such it is considered that the signage fails to maintain safe, secure and convenient access and movement for highway users and is therefore in conflict with Local Plan Policy T4 – New Development and Transport Safety and SPD Advertisements

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed advertisement would materially harm the appearance of the street scene, by reason of its size, siting and undue prominence. The proposed signage would also set an undesirable precedence for similar signage in the area and is therefore in conflict with Local Plan Policy D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making and SPD Advertisements.

Recommendation

Refuse

