



Appeal Decision Notice

Unaccompanied Planning Tribunal Site Visit held on 13th July 2016
Members: Mr. Stuart Fell (Presiding), Mrs. Sheelagh Evans, Mr. John Weir.

Appeal Site: Sigma, Braye Road Industrial Estate, La Route du Braye, Vale.

Property Reference: C00842A003

Planning Application Reference: FULL/2016/0165

Planning Application Valid Date: 28/01/2016

Appeal Case Reference: PAP/014/2016

- The Appeal is made under the provisions of Part VI and Section 68 of The Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005.
 - The Appeal is by Sigma, a commercial business which provides office services and supplies, against the decision of the Environment Department dated 22nd April 2016 to refuse planning permission on a retrospective application to erect a sign on the west elevation of the building at Sigma, Braye Road Industrial Estate, La Route du Braye, Vale.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

The appeal premises

2. The Sigma premises are located within the northern bay of a large industrial building that is situated on the Braye Road Industrial Estate within a Key Industrial Area. The building marks the north-western edge of the industrial estate and lies within a few metres of La Route du Braye, which is a Traffic Priority Route. The north-western corner of the Sigma premises, where the appeal sign is fixed, is positioned at a bend in the road which has the effect of giving this part of the building visual prominence when seen by road users travelling eastwards.

3. While the northern flank of the building is partially screened behind a tall granite boundary wall on the road edge, the eastern flank is open to view across the large car park and vehicle-circulation area that serves the industrial estate. To westbound travellers, the two large, existing Sigma signs that are fixed at high level on the northern and eastern facades are prominent due to their size and position.
4. The appeal sign, which is 7.3m long and 1.22m high has been attached at high level to the western gable so that it is visible above the roofs of the adjoining bungalows. It displays the company name and logo, and the strapline '*your business completed*'. The appeal statement submitted on behalf of Sigma stresses that '*marketing and signage are crucial in letting the public know where we are and what we do*'. The statement also pointed out that the signs on the eastern and northern flanks, which have been in place since 2000, have been paramount in this process.
5. The retrospective application was refused by the Department for the following reason:

'The proposed sign, by virtue of its size, positioning, and the introduction of advertising material within an otherwise residential area, would form an unduly prominent and incongruous feature taking into account the character and visual amenity of the locality and the surrounding streetscape and is not required for the identification of the premises. The proposal would therefore conflict with the intentions of Policies GEN5 (Design), GEN6 (Character and amenity) and DBE1 (Design).'
6. The policies referred to in the decision notice are those to be found within the adopted Urban Area Plan, 2002, as amended. Policy GEN5 states that in considering proposals for development the Committee will take into account the quality of design and materials to be used, as well as the siting, layout and scale of buildings in relation to their surroundings. Policy GEN6 states that locally distinctive features and characteristics of the environment will be taken into account. Whilst Policy DBE1 was clearly written with new buildings in mind, part c) seems to the Tribunal to be relevant in this case, which states that the IDC will require new development to avoid the introduction of elements that would appear obtrusive or discordant in the street scene.

Assessment

7. The Tribunal saw during its site visit that the stretch of La Route du Braye in the vicinity of the appeal site is characterised for the most part by small-scale residential development along and behind the road frontages, and this development is interspersed with areas of open farmland that provide to passers-by a continual reminder of the broader rural setting. The Braye Road Industrial Estate breaks this pattern as it contains buildings that have relatively large footprints and are also tall and bulky, and whose size is emphasised by the modern sheet materials in which they are clad.
8. This visual contrast is most apparent when approaching the industrial estate from the west, where for a considerable distance the land on the north side of the road is undeveloped and natural planting is a dominant feature. On the south side, however, the two-storey, western flank wall of the appeal building forms the immediate backdrop to a row of modest bungalows. The Tribunal saw that the imposing bulk of

the building is partly mitigated as it is concealed to some degree by the granite boundary wall along the road edge and by the bend in the road which occurs at this point.

9. The Tribunal judges that although the relationship between the large industrial shed, the adjoining bungalows and the neighbouring farmland is somewhat incongruous, the effect is neutralized to some degree by the featureless character of the larger building, which from viewpoints to the west is not dissimilar to the appearance of a large modern farm shed.
10. The Tribunal considers that the introduction of a large high-level advertising sign unacceptably disturbs the fragile balance between these diverse land uses in this locality, as it introduces commercial aspects of the industrial estate, namely signage, into a street scene where such features are presently absent. The large size and high-level positioning of the sign exacerbate its rather discordant appearance, and this unfavourable impression is further underlined by the modest scale of the bungalows.
11. The Tribunal has carefully considered the appellant company's contention that additional signage is needed on the western flank of the building so as to further raise awareness of the services that it provides. The Tribunal does not find this argument persuasive, as the enterprise is not reliant on passing trade, and the existing signs on the building are highly visible from the road across the open frontage of the industrial estate. The Tribunal's conclusion is that the appeal sign has an unacceptably harmful and incongruous impact on the locality to the west of the appeal building, and is accordingly in conflict with the aims of the Policies that have been cited, which seek to achieve a harmonious relationship between new development and its surroundings. For these reasons the Tribunal is unable to support this appeal.
12. The Tribunal has considered all other matters raised in the written submissions, and seen during its site visit, but these do not affect its conclusion under the provisions of Part V1 Section 69 of The Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005, that the Appeal cannot not be upheld.

Stuart Fell DipArch RIBA IHBC

Date: 11th August 2016