exp 6/4

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0078/07 Recommendation – Refuse

Site: **Marks and Spencer, Holmbush Centre**
Upper Shoreham Road, Shoreham-by-Sea

Proposal: **Replacement sign on north side of rear tower and additional sign on east side of tower (illuminated on backboards) (retrospective)**

The Application

This is a resubmission of similar signs contained in application SU/215/04 which was refused on 22 October 2004. M & S nevertheless went ahead and installed the signs, thus committing an offence. It is for:-

(a) on the north side of the tower, a dark green signboard measuring 4.2m wide and 2.15m high (overall height 14m) with 'Marks & Spencer' in green letters (replacing the pre-existing directly applied letters and retaining the pre-existing overhead light, both of which were granted consent).

(b) on the east side of the tower, where there was previously no signage, a dark green backboard measuring 3.4m by 1.6m (overall height 13m) with the letters 'M & S' or 'Marks & Spencer' with external downlighter.

In addition to the previous refusal of SU/215/04, of particular relevance is SU/152/92 for 'M & S' directly applied letters on the north side (1.8m high) and west side (1.2m high) of this tower. The application was refused (on grounds of their size, siting and illumination being too prominent and incongruous close to the open downland of the AONB) but subsequently allowed on appeal on 5 April 1993.

Consultations and Representations

South Downs Joint Committee: Reiterates previous objection on grounds that the proposed signage is more intrusive than the previous lettering that was applied direct to the tower. The tower is the part of the superstore most visible from the AONB.

Third Parties: None

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC2, CH1-2, DEV1
Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AC2-3, AB17
Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy 2006-26 (ADC 2007): ENV5, ENV7, ENV10
PPG19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control" (DoE 1992)

Planning Assessment

The site lies within a modern retail park (still in the AONB and area of special control for adverts) but the signage faces the open downland landscape of the AONB and is prominent from the by-pass. Policy AB17 states consent will only be granted where the adverts respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area (and do not create a danger or hazard). CH2 states that development outside AONBs should not detract from their natural beauty, distinctive character, etc.

It is considered that these signs, which differ from the previous ones by the inclusion of backboards and one on the east side, do not meet this requirement. The previous directly applied letters were well-mannered and restrained but nevertheless clearly visible from the by-pass. The present ones, because of their backboards, are unnecessarily extensive, creating a much more overtly commercial effect on the edge of the countryside and have a relatively poor quality appearance adversely affecting the AONB. Signs with backboards have been consistently resisted on this rear elevation

The only change since the last refusal is that Tesco have been given consent to add the lettering 'extra' to the 'Tesco' directly applied letters already on the main rear tower.

The M & S signboards appear to have been put up for no greater reason other than to comply with the latest corporate M & S style with the letters on backboards. However, PPG19 states that "designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of 'corporate' design where it is unsuitable in a particularly sensitive area".

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE on ground that:-

1. RZ3B (amended) The signs, by reason of their inappropriate design incorporating backboards and siting, form unduly prominent features detrimental to the visual amenities and character of a locality situated on the edge of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Case Officer..... Date.....28/3/07.....

Head of Planning & Community..... Date...2.4.07...