

DC/2015/01592

FREESTANDING SIGNS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS ALONG THE A472.

MULTIPLE SITES ALONG THE A472 NEAR USK

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Andrew Jones
Date Registered: 22/01/2016

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

- 1.1 This application seeks advertisement consent for a total of two free standing signs along the A472 near Usk. The signs would be owned by Monmouthshire County Council, but are intended for local businesses to advertise. The signs would be positioned along grassed highway verges.
- 1.2 The signs would measure 1050mm x 550mm with a 20mm mid green border, the artwork area would measure 1000mm x 500mm. Beneath would be an additional sign measuring 1050mm x 200mm with a 200mm mid green border, this would display contact information.
- 1.3 A full list of all site locations is presented below:
- 1 x sign at A472 near main college building, Usk (referred to as sign 1).
- 1 x signs at A472 near riding college, Usk (referred to as sign 2).
- 1.4 Seven previously proposed signs have now been withdrawn from the proposal.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
S16 – Transport
S17 – Place Making and Design

Development Management Policies

DES1 – General Design Considerations
DES3 - Advertisements
EP1 – Amenity and Environmental Protection
MV1 – Development and Highway Considerations
HE1 – Development in Conservation Areas

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Consultations Replies

- 4.1.1 Usk Town Council – Recommend refusal, stating there are already a ‘forest’ of signs on roadsides, no more are needed.

- 4.1.2 Llanbadoc Community Council – Recommend refusal, noting the signs would be a distraction to drivers, located on fast road with limited visibility. Also stated that the A472 has a history of road accidents, and that by adding further distractions, this can only exacerbate the problem.
- 4.1.3 Goetre Fawr Community Council – Have not responded to date.
- 4.1.4 Llantrisant Fawr Community Council – Have not responded to date.
- 4.1.5 MCC Highways – Following discussions with the applicant, the applicant has re-visited the sign locations and carried out detailed surveys, safety audits and assessments in support of the proposed sign locations with particular regard to the signs location, the speed limit, the traffic flows and visual distraction etc. As stated the applicant has considered the impact of the signs on the highway and the immediate environment and I offer no objections to the proposed sign locations, the sign size and typical sign layout details as submitted in support of the application and with particular regard to the Static Advertisement Policy.

4.2 Neighbour Notification

21 representations received. Object on the following grounds;

- Littering of landscape.
- Serves no useful purpose.
- Already experienced safety issues with trial sign at Welsh Street in Chepstow.
- A472 Little Mill to Usk has poor safety record.
- Huge impact on road safety.
- Already have appropriate signage leading into Usk, do not need more.
- Cheap and nasty way to downgrade the approach to a beautiful town.
- Dangerous to distract drivers near a school.
- Blocking sight lines near a pedestrian crossing.
- Is this appropriate at the entrance to a Conservation Area.
- No evidence of economic benefit.
- MCC failed to disclose application on the website or GIS alerts.
- Safety of school children.
- Usk in Bloom work hard to present Usk in the best way.
- Harmful to the efforts to encourage visitors and trade.
- Sign notice posted poorly, is this on purpose to ensure as few objections are received as possible.

4.3 Other Representations

Usk Civic Society – Provided the following comments:

- Considers that they are tacky and will detract from the appearance of the locations at which they would be placed and so affect the amenity of local residents and visitors, particularly in countryside which is for the most part of Special Landscape Area quality.
- will be an unnecessary additional distraction to drivers on a road which already has a history of traffic accidents
- If a passing motorist, seeing one of these signs, wishes to note the details of the advertising business, in these days he may well wish to put the information on his phone. If he stops and turns off his engine to do so, he is creating a traffic hazard

on a busy and narrow road. If he does not, and uses his phone on the move, he commits an offence.

- Very existence of these signs, therefore, tends to incite the commission of a road traffic offence. That, surely, is not something to which a responsible public authority should give countenance.
- This is so close to the two entrances to the school that any additional distraction to drivers must be unacceptable. It is shocking that one part of a local authority should be prepared to place the pupils at one of its own schools at extra risk in this way.
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4.4 Local Member Representations

No comments received.

5.0 **EVALUATION**

5.1 Principle of Development

5.1.1 Local Development Plan Policy DES3 deals specifically with advertisements;

Proposals for advertisements will only be permitted where:

- a) Having regard to the existing number and siting of advertisements in the locality the proposal would not result in an unacceptable clutter of advertisements;
- b) If located within the open countryside they would not unacceptably detract from the rural setting of the locality;
- c) If located in a Conservation Area, they would not unacceptably detract from the character or appearance of the area and if a hanging sign, would not result in undue visual clutter. They should be of an appropriate size and materials for the building from which they hang with a traditional bracket;
- d) If located within the open countryside or Conservation Areas, illumination is only appropriate to uses that reasonably expect to trade at night.

5.1.2 The issues of visual clutter and impact on the countryside (criteria a) and b)) will be addressed in the following sections of this report. With regard to criteria c) and d), none of the sites are within designated Conservation Areas and none feature any form of illumination.

5.2 Amenity

5.2.1 Signs 1 and 2 are positioned adjacent to the college near Usk. This site already features a number of large sign in respect of the college premises. Therefore similar to Sign 1, these are not considered to cause unacceptable additional harm to the visual amenity of the area.

5.3 Highway Safety

5.3.1 Sign 1 is positioned within a 40mph section of the A472 in the vicinity of Usk College. This section of highway also features a controlled pedestrian crossing at the campus which naturally reduces traffic speeds. For these reasons it is not considered that the sign would cause unacceptable distraction.

5.3.2 Sign 2 is located on a straight section of the A472 and would be approximately 60m from the nearest junction, given this distance it is not considered that it would cause

distraction to motorists at this junction. It is therefore considered that there are no highway grounds to warrant refusal of this sign.

5.4 Other Issues Raised

5.4.1 Other concerns relate to the amount of money the project would generate, in turn it is suggested that the only party that would benefit would be the Council. . These financial matters are not a material consideration to the determination of applications for express consent to display advertisements.

5.4.2 Comments have also been raised regarding the public consultation of the application. Site notice were published at all locations in the most suitable publically accessible locations. Any technical issues with regards to the Council's GIS alert system would need to be addressed within the responsible section within the Council.

6.0 **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

6.1 Approval

6.1.1 The advertisements are considered acceptable in accordance with Policies DES1, DES3 and EP1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.

Conditions:

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| 1 | <p>1. Any advertisements displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>2. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.</p> <p>3. Where any advertisement is required under the above Regulations to be removed, the removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>4. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.</p> <p>5. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any road traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, or so as otherwise to render hazardous the use of any highway, railway, waterway (including any coastal waters) or aerodrome (Civil or Military).</p> |
| 2 | <p>The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.</p> |

Informatives:

None.