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Development Management Section & Chief Executive
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APPLICATION NUMBER: 18/0122

18-Jun-18

Dear Neal, Gary & Pippa

I am extremely upset at the way I am being treated regarding my planning application in respect of the signage above the shop.

I feel that I am being pushed into a corner to do things that will not look right and are in fact just an opinion and not based on the real benefit I am bringing to the local area and the wider awareness of growing businesses in Blackpool.

My business is in an area of Blackpool (South Shore) that is in need of re development and investment. I receive no assistance from the council in terms of grants and I do not have any external investors to call on. This "leap of faith" expansion of my business has been done with the help of the bank and my own cash reserves. My house and my business are on the line here. I am not mortgage free and the reason I do this is because I have a passion for my business, for my town and also for the people who I employ who rely on the growth and success of the business.

I employ 18 people here and I have just employed a further 4 people based on this expansion. ALL of these are LOCAL people.

Yesterday I employed a local girl who's parents are unemployed, she is unemployed but showed me a great desire to get back into work. I would have thought that Blackpool Council would be excited for me and excited about my business. Gordon Marsden MP who's offices are 4 doors down from me is extremely supportive and delighted at the investment and job opportunities I am creating.

Therefore, why am I coming up against so much resistance for the sake of an opinion that in my opinion is not based on any justifiable reason?

My sign has been designed to represent fascia that blends in with its surroundings, the grey box is NOT illuminated and is shallower than previously (in fact less than many on Highfield Road) with the actual sign / logo only .4m high and 4m across.

I have this morning taken a drive down the length of Highfield Road and these are my findings.

Winstons Bar



This sign / fascia is 900mm deep. The logo is way bigger than mine and to be honest their front is a mish mash and is no comparison to my shop front! This was passed late 2016 as conversion from 2 premises to 1 premise.

Tiger



Take a look at this sign. It's hardly subtle and is way deeper than 900mm

Causer & Co



Again way over the 900 deep as is the Barbers and next to that they are putting their sign up which again is way over the 900mm.

Left Move



Left Move have branded the garage and the windows in Pink & Grey. Again, how can this be compared with my beautiful office front?

And finally....next door to me. Are you seriously telling me that my shop offers nothing to enhance the local shopping scene when I have this next door?

I have spoken with Peter and putting cladding stall risers up to the top will look hideous and none of the other businesses have done this. I am not trying to be awkward here, just asking for your support of someone who wants to get on with his job and create jobs for Blackpool.

Please can I just make the point that I am the ONLY business on Highfield Road that has actually taken the conscious decision to create “proper” stall risers between the buildings. Not just a piece of plastic or wood, I did my research in view of the planning request and actually replicated what a stall riser is meant to be.



This is the picture of the shop front so that you can clearly see how this looks and you can see that it is amazing and does not look out of place at all and the logo / sign is subtle & spot on.



The position of the front door has been made for a very special purpose.

We have received complaints in the past that the small shop was almost impossible to access & maneuver in a mobility scooter and very difficult in a wheelchair. Also, customers were somewhat isolated from the enquiry/ booking process and this just had to change.

Therefore space had to be created to allow easy access and maneuverability for those with mobility issues. The only solution was to place the door to the left and thus allowing space to move around and also a round desk to be placed with a laptop so that people with such a disability can place themselves in any position where they can see the screen and be part of the whole enquiry / booking access. They also will have space for any instore events & promotions. As you can see from this photo, we have the widest pavement in Blackpool and I would dearly like to build a small permanent ramp for our guests with mobility issues. We can't have level access because the floor joists are higher than the pavement.



The view from the staff room is one that I have not created, this was past as a living area many years ago. The view is also no different to that of my old admin office which had five people working six days a week and was passed over 16 years ago.

I cannot accept that this poses any issues and you cannot see into any of the gardens or any of the houses from either position. If anything the plans passed for the hair salon with an outside sitting area above the garage poses a far bigger problem.



The whole community is supportive of what I have done and if you don't believe me, please by all means come out and knock on doors and speak to people. I just wish others would invest their money to improve the local shopping scene and the service they provide to the community.

Please can I address the change of usage upstairs in 296. I changed usage of 298 and other businesses have also done the same, including the labour office 4 doors away. But there is an even bigger issue here.

The flat at 296 was inhabited by tenants who took drugs and in particular smoked marihuana regularly. I had numerous calls with the police up to the point where they were prepared to issue a warrant and take out an eviction notice. I had to endure this with ladies in my business who were pregnant.

Also, the sweet shop below that was also rented, causing horrendous litter issues every day and I was constantly having to deal with children throwing drinks at my shop window, discarding litter on the pavement. Every morning the council boys had a ridiculous job in cleaning this up, even after my efforts. They are delighted with the new shop.

Last year I had to endure 8 months of no parking and reduced footfall due to United Utilities work. I received no compensation for this and if I hadn't purchased next door it would have become a vacant property – just like 294 which you can see is now a year on still sat there with shutters down.

I am so pleased to know that Whitworths is investing money to make their shop front look amazing. That will be great for the block and is long overdue.

In closing, I have read the report that is being presented to the committee and it upsets me to read what I believe is an undercurrent that I have done nothing to understand the situation and that I have made decisions somewhat in light of any serious consideration.

This is 100% not true.

I have been brought up to have respect for people, processes and democracy.


I have been asking for the opportunity to meet and discuss this on site since the end of April and early May. This was categorically refused and eventually Gary very kindly agreed to meet with me. This was delayed (through no fault of Gary's) but when he was able to visit, I was out of town on business on Thursday 17th May. We were told at this point an answer would be forthcoming by close of business or the next day at the latest.

By this time we still had no sign up and people were starting to suggest we had closed. It was 2 weeks and 1 day later that a reply came back from the planning officer.

I simply could not wait any longer as I had to get my shop open and let people know we are open for business. It was not my intention to go ahead and force the issue, far from it and I do not want anyone thinking I am that sort of person. But I haven't done anything that hasn't been approved previously.

Haven't I had to endure enough? Is this how Blackpool council treats people? I want to be part of a town & council that will go the extra mile for businesses and local shopping communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to explain my position.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PN', with a small dot to the right.

Philip Nuttall
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