

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2016

by Richard McCoy BSc MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 04 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M2325/Z/16/3146370

Windy Harbour Road, Little Eccleston with Larbeck, Lancashire FY6 8NB

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs S Raynor-Porter against the decision of Fylde Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/0522, dated 22 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 5 February 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is a for sale sign.
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Procedural matter

1. The Council's Decision Notice described the advertisement as "1 x Non Illuminated Hoarding Sign". As this more accurately describes the sign I shall deal with the appeal on this basis.

Decision

2. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the appeal sign on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The Council have referred to saved Policies EP9 and SP2 of the adopted Fylde Borough Local Plan (LP) in connection with this appeal. EP9 relates to advertisements on buildings and SP2 relates to development in countryside areas. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity, and where applicable, public safety. Public safety is not raised in this instance. Therefore, it is the issue of visual amenity alone that must be decisive although I have taken the development plan policies into account as a material consideration.
 5. The appeal site forms part of a larger plot of land that is currently under development and is located at the corner of Garstang New Road (A585) and Windy Harbour Road. It stands in an area designated as countryside in the LP. The appeal sign, a non-illuminated board measuring around 3m high and 6m wide, attached to three posts, with an overall height of around 7.1m, was being displayed at the time of my inspection. The appellant pointed out that the sign is temporary and relates to the live construction site for a golf course, hotel
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- and 40 holiday chalets. It functions as a locator point for HGVs visiting the site and as a sale board sign.
6. An approved sign was removed from the site recently by the Highways Agency as part of the A585 Windy Harbour Junction Improvements Scheme. The appellant claimed that this appeal sign is smaller than the previous sign and was re-erected after the highway improvements works were completed. However, I note the Council's uncontested evidence that the recent highway works have meant that the re-erected sign stands in a different position.
 7. Although part of a development site, I did not observe construction activity at the appeal site which appeared to share its affinity with the surrounding countryside. In my judgement, the height and overall size of the sign make it a very prominent feature. This is increased by its location at what I observed to be a gateway junction. This sense of exposure adds to the starkness and visual dominance of the advertisement board within this countryside location. As a result, the sign is an incongruous feature that detracts from the character and appearance of the area, harming its visual amenity.
 8. I have taken into account of the aforementioned LP Policies which seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies. For the reasons given above and having regard to all the other matters raised, I conclude that the advertisement is harmful to amenity and I dismiss the appeal.

Richard McCoy

Inspector