
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2016

by W Fabian BA Hons Dip Arch RIBA IHBC

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

Decision date: 19 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/B2002/Z/16/3157461

Dolphin Hand Car Wash, Ladysmith Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 9SQ

- 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 Dolphin Hand Car Wash against the decision of North East Lincolnshire Council.
 - The application Ref DM/0507/16/ADV, dated 19 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is projection fascia sign off canopy.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The Dolphin Hand Car Wash occupies a former petrol station forecourt on Ladysmith Road, a wide through road linking to more major routes in Grimsby. In the immediate vicinity there is a mix of commercial uses, including a car sales forecourt next to the appeal site and then a public house, with a laundry premises opposite. Close-by on both sides the road becomes leafy and residential.
4. The sign that is the subject of this appeal has already been installed. It is a double sided LED display that is brightly illuminated on both sides and the sign content changes on a rotation at short intervals. It projects at high level towards the road on a steel angle bracket that has been fixed to the outer edge of the former petrol station canopy. Other non-illuminated signs, which are not the subject of this appeal, have been fixed to the canopy edges.
5. Policy GEN17 of the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2003, (LP) is a material consideration in this appeal. It requires, amongst other things, that advertisements should not have a significant adverse effect on the visual amenities of the area.
6. There are numerous other signs of various configurations at adjacent business premises. I saw none that comprises LED displays and most are non-

illuminated. They include some that project towards the highway, for instance the traditional post mounted swing sign at the public house nearby. Others also project upwards, mounted onto flat roofs, but in each case the location and position 'fits' with the immediate surroundings. For the main part I saw that these other signs are of a good quality of construction and have been carefully located to complement the host buildings and their curtilages.

7. By contrast to these well designed signs, the appeal sign projects above the top of the forecourt canopy in a way that is unbalanced and not well-related to the form of the canopy. It is fixed to a metal angle frame that projects beyond the edge of the sign both towards the road and above the sign, with rough cut ends that stick out from it and this adds to the uncomfortable relationship with the existing canopy. The construction of the sign appears to be of poor quality; the edging looks a little distorted and ill-fitting in places, with surface fixings, and there is a slight gap between the sign and the canopy, such that the bolt fixings between it and the support frame are partly visible. The individual LED bulbs are relatively large, and set with gaps between, so that when unlit, they create a 'rough' texture.
8. The stark bright illumination is, as intended, extremely eye-catching, even when static. This adds to the visual prominence of the sign, which is unduly prominent in the mixed commercial and residential surroundings of the road. Overall, it has a slightly ramshackle ad-hoc appearance that does not equate to good design, the importance of which is highlighted at paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. While the Framework also seeks to build a strong competitive economy, it establishes that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment, as has occurred in this case. The appellant has offered to forego the non-static operation of the sign, but this would not address the other design flaws that I have set out above.
10. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other considerations raised I conclude that the sign has harmed the visual amenity of the surrounding area and the appeal should be dismissed.

Wenda Fabian

Inspector