

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by David Cross BA (Hons), PGDip, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/Z/16/3158100

Corner of Main Road/Long Dales Lane, Nether Kellet, Carnforth LA61 1EA

- 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 Mr Geoff Billington against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00622/ADV, dated 16 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is directional sign to Meadow View Caravan Park – replacement of sign on existing framework.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a field adjacent to a junction between Main Road and Long Dales Lane. The proposed sign would consist of a board supported between two poles to a maximum height of approximately 2.4m. The sign would relate to the Meadow View Leisure Park which is located some distance to the south east of the proposed sign. Due to the size and location of the sign it would be a prominent feature adjacent to the junction.
 4. Despite its countryside location, the area around the appeal site does have a relatively cluttered appearance with features including highway signs, other advertisements, telegraph poles, a litter bin and various walls and fences. However, even within this visual environment, the proposed sign would be an intrusive and discordant feature. It would project above a post and rail fence and metal railings which delineate a public footpath and the highway. It would be a free standing feature located in the field and would not relate visually to other features in the area. Notwithstanding the already cluttered appearance of the area, the proposed sign when viewed against the open landscape would appear as an alien feature intruding into the countryside. This incongruous appearance would be exacerbated by the remoteness from the business it would relate to.
 5. The appellant states that the sign would be located on an existing framework for a previous sign which has since been removed. I saw on my site visit that
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there were two supporting poles in place. However, I note that the Council states that neither advertisement consent nor planning permission has previously been granted for development in this location. Therefore, whilst there may have previously been a sign in this location, this would appear to have been erected without consent and I can therefore give this very little weight in favour of the appeal proposal.

6. The appellant states that he has received complaints from delivery drivers, visitors and potential customers that they have had difficulty in locating his business. I saw that there was an existing highways tourist information sign directing traffic from the junction to the appellant's business, though the appellant questions the effectiveness of this. However, whilst I acknowledge the role that the proposed sign could play in helping to direct drivers to the appellant's business, on balance the evidence before me does not demonstrate that this material benefit would outweigh the harm that the proposal would cause to amenity.
7. I have had regard to the objection from a local business on highways issues, however this does not add to my reasons for dismissing this appeal. I have considered all other matters raised, including the lack of objections from the Parish Council and the Highways Development Control Officer, but find nothing that alters my decision.
8. I conclude that the proposal would harm the visual amenity of the area. Development plan policies are not determinative in advertisement appeals but, due to the harm to visual amenity, the proposal would conflict with Policies DM6 and DM35 of the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2014 as well as saved Policy E4 of the Lancaster District Local Plan 2008. The proposal would also conflict with the Core Principles of the National Planning Policy Framework which recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, as well as paragraph 67 which states that advertisements should be appropriate to their setting and not have a negative impact on the appearance of the natural environment.
9. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR