

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2017

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/Z/17/3168444

Wakefield Lodge Estate, Potterspury, Northamptonshire NN12 7QX

- 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 Daniel Richmond-Watson against the decision of South Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2016/2906/ADV, dated 1 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2017.
 - The advertisements are 2 x large header panel and 9 slats and 2 x main entrance.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The applicant was Mr Dan Richmond-Watson of Wakefield Farms Limited but the appeal has progressed in the name of Mr Daniel Richmond-Watson of Wakefield Lodge Estate. The latter details have been adopted as the appellant. The site address has been taken from the application form.
3. The Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework make it clear that advertisements should be the subject of control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Council has not objected to the appeal scheme for public safety reasons. Whilst the Council has referred to development plan policies which it considers relevant to this appeal they cannot, by themselves, be decisive but are material considerations to the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

4. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the advertisements on amenity.

Reasons

5. The 4 non-illuminated advertisements, subject of this appeal, have already been erected along the west side of Watling Street with the 2 entrance signs located by a road junction and the 2 large header panel signs within fields. By reason of having been erected, it has been possible to assess their current impact upon the amenity of the area which, to the west of the road, is principally characterised as verdant open countryside with some isolated buildings and groups of buildings, including Wakefield Country Courtyard which the signs advertise.

6. In dealing with proposals for advance signs sited off highway land and directing potential customers to businesses in scenically attractive rural areas, the National Planning Practice Guidance recognises that appropriate sign-posting can benefit the local economy and this should be reflected through the decision-making process. The appellant identifies that advanced sign-posting of the businesses at Wakefield Country Courtyard is one of the reasons why the 4 advertisements have been erected.
7. However, although the 2 signs adjacent to the junction which identify the main entrance, the 2 larger signs which have been erected within the fields include more than directional information. These signs include changeable slats listing the businesses. These individual slats cumulatively contribute to the excessive size and visual dominance of these advertisements. The adverse visual impact of these 2 freestanding advertisements on the open and verdant character and appearance of the adjacent countryside is accentuated by the choice of material, in particular the extensive white background of both the header and the slats.
8. One of the larger signs is sited adjacent to Listed Buildings located on the east side of the road. The Council has not identified that the signs cause material harm to the setting of these Listed Buildings and there are no reasons for me to disagree with this assessment. However, this matter is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the unacceptable harm caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
9. The Council has referred to a precedent being established if the appeal was successful. However, the effect of the signs on the amenity of the surrounding area has been assessed on its own merits. Other advertisements fronting the east side of the road close to the appeal signs were noted during the site visit but they are directly associated with adjacent existing businesses rather than being freestanding.
10. For the reasons given, it is concluded the advertisements are unacceptably detrimental to the interests of amenity. Account has been taken of Policies EV35, AD1, AD16, AD17, AD19 and AD21 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and, given it has been concluded that the signs harm amenity, the appeal scheme conflicts with these policies. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR