

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 March 2017

by C Jack BSc(Hons) MA MA(TP) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/Z/17/3169009

126 High Street, Strood, Rochester ME2 4TR

- 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 George Eghator of Anchor Properties against the decision of The Medway Council.
 - The application Ref MC/16/4272, dated 12/10/2016, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as a 'large billboard type sign mounted onto the side of our business building'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to the prominent flank elevation of 126 High Street (No 126), which faces towards Gun Lane and the nearby signalised junction of the High Street with Gun Lane and Cuxton Road, which was busy with vehicular traffic at the time of my visit. The area is predominantly commercial in nature, featuring a wide variety of businesses, including hot food takeaways, hairdressers, estate agents and car maintenance centres. There are many existing advertisements in the locality, including pole signs, fascia signs and hanging signs, most of which are associated with the business occupier of the premises to which they relate.
 4. It is proposed to install a billboard of approximately 3m x 4m on the side elevation of No 126. This would be used for the display of paper and vinyl advertisements and would not be illuminated. The colour and nature of advertisements would change periodically, depending on the given advertiser's requirements.
 5. The side elevation of No 126 is formed of traditional brick and is currently free from any form of advertisement. It is open to clear public view from a number of nearby viewpoints, including the junction, and as a result of this and the proposed scale and position extending to the first floor level of the building, the billboard would appear excessively large and very prominent in visual terms, and thereby incongruous with the traditional, unfettered brick elevation. While I accept that advertisements need to be positioned where they can be seen,
-

the effect of the proposed billboard would be to significantly dominate the side elevation of No 126. It would also add a large advertisement to the general proliferation of advertisements in the locality, exacerbating the cumulative cluttered effect in the street scene. In this regard I also note that the Council has identified extensive building and street signage as a key concern that it considers contributes to the poor appearance of Strood town centre.

6. I therefore conclude that the proposed advertisement would have a significant negative impact, both individually and cumulatively, resulting in harm to the visual amenity of the area. In reaching this view I have considered the various matters raised by the appellant, including that advertising is important to attract trade to the area and that the sign would therefore add to the vitality of the town. However, these factors do not outweigh my findings in relation to visual amenity.

Conclusion

7. The Council has drawn my attention to saved Policy BNE10 of the Medway Local Plan 2003, which it considers to be relevant to this appeal and I have taken it into account where material. Given that I have identified that there would be harm to visual amenity, the proposal would conflict with this policy, including because the scale of the advertisement would be detrimental to the area and it would result in additional visual clutter in the locality.
8. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Catherine Jack

INSPECTOR