

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2017

by Timothy C King BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/Z/16/3164185

The Pines, Kings Drive, Midhurst, GU29 0BJ

- 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 CALA Homes (Thames) Limited against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/03617/ADV, dated 15 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is '*Erection of 3 no. non-illuminated free standing and fascia signage to Sales & Marketing Office.*'
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and consent is granted for the display of three non-illuminated freestanding signs and one non-illuminated fascia sign. This Express consent expires on 15 July 2018, as applied for and confirmed by the appellant, and is subject to the other standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Procedural Matters

2. The originally submitted plans included Drawing No 004 which shows a series of small box signs, the lettering for which provides various information relating to the surrounding new housing development, currently under construction. Although the National Park Authority refers to this additional signage in its Reason for Refusal the appeal papers confirm that this does not form part of the appeal.
3. The original application form indicates the various signs' depths, giving dimensions which are slightly in excess of those figures shown on the submitted plan (Drawing No 003). The appellant has confirmed that those figures shown on the plan are the actual dimensions involved and given that three of the signs are already in situ – the fascia, the availability board and the 'welcome' sign - I can confirm from my site visit that this is correct. Only the proposed freestanding parking sign, the intended location of which is shown on Drawing No 002, remains to be erected.

Main Issue

4. The Advertisement Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity (and/or public safety). The Authority has raised no concerns in respect of public safety and, as such, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the advertisement on the character and appearance of the
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surrounding area, with particular regard to its location within the South Downs National Park (SDNP), an area of advertisement control.

Reasons

5. The appeal concerns four non-illuminated signs; one being the shop fascia to the sales and marketing office relating to the new housing estate being constructed surrounding the site. The various signage, due to its directional purpose in relation to surrounding buildings, constitutes a type which may be considered in areas of such control.
6. Paragraph 67 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment. Further, Paragraph 115 thereto comments that great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks, which have the highest level of protection.
7. In assessing the particular visual impact in this instance, despite the SDNP location, I have also had regard to the signage's particular function and purpose. Further, the new development to which it relates represents a small, somewhat isolated enclave of development within the wider SDNP, and I consider that, given the particular circumstances, the appeal turns on the signage's visual effect on its immediate surroundings. The character and visual amenities of the National Park would be unaffected by this very localised display.
8. In terms of local planning policy I consider that Policy BE9 of the Chichester District Local Plan and emerging Policy SD55 of the South Downs Local Plan are of most relevance. The latter reflects the aims and requirements of the adopted policy (BE9) and, to this end, neither do I consider that the signs' size, appearance or the materials used would detract from the character and appearance of the immediate surroundings. The intended absence of illumination also helps in this regard. In light of this I must disagree with the Authority's view that the signage represents an incongruous feature within the rural environment. It is temporary in nature, relating only to the sale of the new housing, with removal scheduled for July 2018.
9. I have considered the relevant policies cited by the Authority and have taken them into account in reaching my decision. However, this has not been the only consideration in reaching my decision. As regards the proposed display I do not find, in the particular circumstances involved, any material conflict with the Policies' aims and objectives.
10. I conclude, for the reasons given above, that the proposed display would not be harmful to local amenity. The Authority has suggested the imposition of certain conditions should the appeal be allowed. However, the terms of the express consent hereby granted addresses the restrictions sought by the Authority.
11. Accordingly, the appeal succeeds.

Timothy C King

INSPECTOR