
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 25 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/Z/17/3169848
92 High Street, Ruislip HA4 8LS

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kevin Gibson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 9480/ADV/2016/86, dated 20 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 December 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is Gibson Honey fascia sign.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the advertisement as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Preliminary Matter

2. On the application form the appellant sought deemed consent for a period up to 26 September 2026. The Regulations¹ provide for an express consent to expire at the end of five years or such alternative period as specified by the Council. However, I have not been presented with any reasons why such a longer period would be necessary and the Council have not indicated that a period other than five years should be specified in the event that the appeal is successful. I have therefore granted express consent for a five year period. However, except in particular defined circumstances, advertisements displayed after the expiry of express consent can benefit from deemed consent and continue to be displayed subject to certain conditions and limitations².

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the sign has on amenity.

Reasons

4. The sign has already been installed albeit that it differs from that shown on the submitted drawings in that it does not include a telephone number and internet address. The sign is aluminium and the photographs supplied by the appellant indicate that only the lettering and logo are illuminated from within.

¹ Regulation 14. (7).

² Class 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

5. The fascia sign is located on a shop unit in a group of buildings which curve around the corner of the junction of High Street and Ickenham Road and occupy a prominent position within the Ruislip Village Conservation Area as a result. The Appraisal³ identifies the arts and crafts influenced styles of buildings on the High Street, including the appeal site and its neighbours, contributing to the Conservation Area's character. It goes on to identify poor and inappropriate shop signage on the High Street as a particular issue which it illustrates with a photograph which includes the appeal site (with its former sign).
6. Although their vertical dimensions vary, the majority of commercial fascia signs in the vicinity are of modern materials displaying corporate colours and logos. Many of these are illuminated including some with individual lettering and logos with 'halo' type illumination and some with flush, back-lit lettering and logos. However, despite these variations the overall character and appearance at ground floor level is of a relatively harmonious, commercial streetscene although there are some examples of inappropriate signage.
7. The sign is internally illuminated, however its appearance is relatively subtle as only the letters and logo are illuminated against the otherwise dark blue background. Whilst this is not of the externally or 'halo' type illumination preferred by the Council, its relatively simple arrangement does not appear at odds with the commercial appearance of surrounding signage and is not overly incongruous or dominant within the established streetscene.
8. However, the sign is of considerable height in relation to the building on which it is situated and its lower edge extends below the existing corbels on either side of the shopfront. This makes it a conspicuous element within the façade and it appears large in the context of the scale, form and architectural composition of the host building.
9. Nevertheless, based on photographic evidence provided by the appellant, the sign is not as high overall or positioned as low on the façade as that which it replaced and it has a more limited extent of illumination. Whilst these positive changes compared to the previous situation are relatively limited it has resulted in a minor improvement with regards to its effect on the host building.
10. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Ruislip Village Conservation Area. Whilst the effects of the reduction in height and illumination are too limited to result in an enhancement of this character or appearance it has the effect of preserving these attributes as they exist.
11. Its neutral effect on the Conservation Area and slight reduction in size compared to the previous arrangement weigh in favour of the proposal and, on balance, the proposal does not harm the visual amenity of the area.
12. I have taken into account Local Plan⁴ Policies BE1 and HE1 and saved UDP⁵ Policies BE4, BE27 and BE 29 which seek to maintain the quality of the built environment, conserve and enhance heritage assets including conservation areas as well as limiting the size of advertisement displays on business

³ Ruislip Village Conservation Area Appraisal, 2010.

⁴ A Vision for 2026 Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies, 2012.

⁵ London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan, 1998.

premises. I have also taken the council's guidance⁶ into consideration which discourages internally illuminated fascia signs in Conservation Areas. These policies and guidance are material insofar as they relate to amenity. Notwithstanding that there is a degree of conflict with these policies and guidance, taking into account the improvement over the previous arrangement and its overall effects in the context of the Conservation Area's character and appearance I have concluded that the proposal does not result in any harm to amenity.

13. For the reasons set out above the appeal is allowed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

⁶ Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document – Shopfronts, 2006.