
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2018

by C Victory BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/H/17/3180879

Tubs Hill House, London Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1BL

- 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 Sevenoaks (THH) LLP against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref SE/17/01071/ADV, dated 28 March 2017, was refused on 26 May 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is the temporary display of 2 freestanding totem signs and 6 signs behind hedge/planter with the totem signs to be illuminated by LEDs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the temporary display of 2 totem signs and 6 signs behind hedge/planter at Tubs Hill House, London Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1BL, subject to the 5 standard conditions set out in the Regulations and the following additional conditions:
 - 1) The signs permitted by this consent shall not be displayed on the site after 30 March 2018.
 - 2) The totem signs shall not be illuminated.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council issued a split decision in which temporary advertisement consent was granted for 1 fascia sign, 2 small railing signs, and 2 large railing signs. I have therefore omitted these elements from the development proposed. All the advertisements have been installed and I shall therefore determine this appeal on the basis that it is a retrospective application. The appellant has stated that the illumination of the totem signs has been turned off prior to the determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed signage on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

4. The advertisements are sited to the front of Tubs Hill House, a former office building which has been converted to residential units and is now known as Bouchier Court. At the time of the site visit the external works looked almost complete. The advertisements are designed to promote the new residential units and are spread across the site frontage.

5. There are residential dwellings directly opposite the site, and adjacent to the north is Tub Hill Parade, which has ground floor units with modest fascia signs set underneath a canopy of upper floor residential properties, and set back from the road behind a car park. Beyond this there is a small row of shops on either side of London Road on the approach to Sevenoaks railway station, a few hundred metres north of the appeal site. Consequently, the site forms a transition between the commercial area adjacent to the railway station and the more residential character to the south. There are relatively few advertisements in the immediate locality of the site.
6. The totem signs are set back from the road, just in front of the entrance railings and would be seen against the backdrop of the entrance canopy. Three small signs are positioned on either side of the entrance, but as the site frontage is wide and the signs are angled away from the site these signs are not all clearly visible within the same view, aside from those properties immediately opposite.
7. Together with the signs already permitted by the Council, the development of this site has already disrupted the normal character and appearance of the area. However, the appellant has stated that the signage is to be removed at the end of March 2018 and until that time the signs are not unduly discordant given the already disrupted character and appearance of the area, and would therefore be acceptable. However, illumination of the totem signs would significantly increase their prominence, particularly at night, and would therefore materially harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. My decision is subject to the 5 standard conditions in the Regulations. The advertisements are only acceptable during the construction works so a condition is required to ensure their removal and the appellant has confirmed in the application that consent is only required until the end of March 2018. A condition is also required to prevent the illumination of the totem signs. Both additional conditions are required to safeguard visual amenity.
9. The Council has referred to Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015). While I have had regard to this policy, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors, and the Council policy has not, itself, been decisive.
10. For the reasons set out above I conclude that subject to the stated conditions the display of the advertisements is not harmful to amenity and the appeal should be allowed.

C Victory

INSPECTOR