



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2019 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Andrew Owen MA BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/Z/19/3225758

27 Bell Street, Reigate RH2 7AD

- 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 Bills Restaurants Ltd against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02594/ADV, dated 11 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2019.
 - The advertisement is a double sided internally illuminated projecting sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. During the site visit I observed that the advert has been installed and I have considered the appeal on this retrospective basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area, including the Reigate Town Centre Conservation Area and the locally listed building to which the advert is attached.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The projecting illuminated signage is affixed to the face of 27 Bell Street, a locally listed building located within the Reigate Town Centre Conservation Area. The advertisement relates to the restaurant which occupies the ground floor of the building, located within a dense commercial area with a number of historic buildings. The area is characterised by two and three storey buildings of mixed architectural styles and retail uses. During my site visit I observed that a large proportion of the shops along Bell Street have fascia signs and small non-illuminated projecting signs.
6. Although, as the appellant has highlighted, modestly proportioned projecting signs are not uncharacteristic in the Conservation Area and along Bell Street in particular, the sign's internally illuminated nature introduces an

uncharacteristic element to the street scene and detracts from the more traditional character of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the neon lighting draws the eye and so fails to preserve the setting of the locally listed building.

7. Therefore, the display of the illuminated advertisement would be detrimental to amenity. I have taken into account the Reigate Shopfront Design Guide 1993 as well as saved policy Sh2 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2005 (the 'local plan') which seeks to ensure outdoor advertisements are designed to be appropriate within their context. The proposal would also conflict with saved policies Pc 10 and Pc 13 of the local plan which together seek to ensure the character of the Conservation Area and locally listed buildings are preserved. As I have found that the proposal harms amenity it would fail to accord with these policies.
8. The harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial and in such instances paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I find no public benefits that outweigh this less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area.
9. The appellant's agent has suggested the existence of a 'fallback' position with the possibility of erecting a non-illuminated projecting sign under Class 5 of Schedule 3 of Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. However, as set out above, it is the illuminated nature of the advert that is uncharacteristic of the area and in that regard it is distinctly different from that which could be installed as deemed consent.
10. Similarly, the agent refers to a previous application for an illuminated fascia sign at No. 27. However, again this is distinctly different from that proposed which should be determined on its own individual merits. Furthermore, existing illuminated signage to the front of the building does not mitigate my view that additional illumination on the projecting sign, which is more prominent, is harmful to the locally listed building and does not respect the character of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation

11. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR