
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons)

by Andrew Owen BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/Z/19/3225014

Starbucks, Etna Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1JF

- 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 Mark Hepburn against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/18/2168/ADV, dated 23 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 18 February 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1 internally illuminated 7.5m tall totem pole sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

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

Preliminary matters

3. The Council issued a split decision which refused advertisement consent for the totem pole sign, identified as sign F on the drawings, but granted consent for all the other adverts proposed in that application. My recommendation therefore relates solely to the totem pole sign.
4. The address I have used above reflects that given on the appeal form instead of that used on the application form as this more accurately identifies the site.

Main Issue

5. The main issue for the appeal is the effect of the proposal on amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is located within close proximity to the town centre and is occupied by a single storey coffee shop building with a drive-through facility. The surrounding area is made up of a hotel, some industrial units and a number of residential properties. The totem pole sign would be located alongside Compiegne Way, a relatively busy road on the eastern boundary of the site. However, due to the large number of trees in the area, the presence of a river adjacent to the site and the proximity of a number of residential dwellings, the character of the area is somewhat suburban and leafy in nature.

7. The height of the proposed totem pole would be significant. Also, it would be detached from, and located closer to the main road than, the buildings and other advertisements on the site, which would render it very conspicuous. Therefore, the sign would occupy a prominent position on the site and it would appear as an overly dominant and incongruous addition to the surrounding area. This dominance would be increased by the proposed illumination of the sign in a relatively low-lit, partly residential, area and it is not considered that the requirement for the sign to be seen outside the hours of daylight would be sufficient reason to find this harm acceptable.
8. The appellant's comments that the proposed sign is intended to alert drivers to the coffee shop and would be required to make the unit commercially viable are noted. However, it is considered that the coffee shop is currently well advertised with both an elevated sign on the shop itself and an advertisement board on the southern boundary of the site already in place. Similarly, although such a feature may be commonplace at other drive-through facilities, each advertisement must be considered within its own individual setting. The appellant also highlights computer-generated imagery from the approved planning application submission showing a similar totem pole sign. However, the approval of that application for planning permission does not imply any approval of the signage and so therefore cannot be given any weight.
9. In summary, I consider that the totem pole sign would be an incongruous addition to the street scene and I conclude that this advertisement would unacceptably harm the visual amenity of the area.
10. The Council has cited conflict with Policies CS3 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (December 2010) and Policies DM2 (Creating Places), DM14 (Protecting and Enhancing Natural Resources, Minimising Pollution and Safeguarding from Hazards) and DM38 (Shop Fronts and Advertisements) of the Joint Development Management Policies Document (February 2015) and I have taken account of those policies. I have also taken into account paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework which guards against poorly placed and designed adverts. As I have concluded that the advert would harm amenity, it therefore does not accord with these policies.

Conclusions and Recommendation

11. For the above reasons and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Emma Worby

APPEALS 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