
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2019

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/Z/19/3228239

Portland Vets, 8 Sangers Mews, Horley Row, Horley RH6 8DH

- 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 Portland Vets against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02659/ADV, dated 17 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as "Re-use of 1 existing sign, with changed business description and 1 new sign to provide visual indication of business premises. This sign to be identical to the other sign".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposed signs on visual amenity including the setting of a locally listed building.

Reasons

3. Sangers Mews relates to locally listed two storey buildings converted to residential apartments and a unit occupied as a veterinary surgery. These are set behind a shared parking area and landscape strip that fronts Horley Row. To the east is the vacant Chequers Hotel and associated car park, access to which is via a road to the western side of Sangers Mews. There is an area of open space to the southern side of Horley Row opposite Sangers Mews. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character. There is a petrol filling station and associated shop to the east of the Chequers Hotel site within a roundabout at the junction of Horley Row with the A.23.
4. The proposal seeks to retain a monolith sign about 3.6m in height and 2m in width displaying the company name, contact details and logo for the veterinary practice. The sign is located within the landscape strip close to the front boundary wall and railings to which a light has been fixed to provide external lighting. The sign faces south-west towards the residential area. A second similar monolith sign is proposed nearby within the landscape strip to face south-east towards the roundabout. It would have similar external illumination. To the east of the two signs is the access to Sangers Mews from Horley Row. There is a non-illuminated sign to both sides of this access providing the same information as the monolith sign.

5. The existing and proposed monolith signs would appear as large and prominent features, rising high above the height of the railings and supporting columns bounding the site. They would appear conspicuous from the open space opposite and in the street scene and would dominate the relatively short landscape strip in which they would be located. In association with the two lower signs by the site entrance they would result in a clutter of advertising material that would be excessive in relation to the scale of the premises to which the business relates, out of character with the predominantly residential area and detrimental to visual amenity.
6. The Council has cited Policies Pc10 and Em3 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan (2005) in the reason for refusal. The Control of Advertisement Regulations state that applications for advertisement consent should be determined in the interests of amenity and public safety. Consequently, although I have taken these policies into account, they have not been a decisive consideration in my determination of this appeal. But in that the mass of the two monolith signs would obstruct views of the locally listed buildings in Sangers Mews from Horley Row, there would be some conflict with Policy Pc10 that requires proposals to not detract from the character or setting of Locally Listed Buildings.
7. The appellant has pointed out that the existing monolith sign replaced a similarly sized sign on the site relating to the Chequers Hotel. The photograph submitted with the appeal shows that the sign was then set back further from the frontage and more angled to face the access to the western side of Sangers Mews. The appellant has also drawn my attention to two remaining large signs for the Hotel. One is to the western side of the hotel car park access, backs on to a hedge and fence and is framed by tree branches above; it is only readily visible in views from the east and is not unduly conspicuous. The other hotel sign is at the front of the extensive grounds to the Chequers Hotel; it is not disproportionate to the scale of the site or the size of the premises to which it relates and is not unduly conspicuous in the street scene. By contrast, the two monolith signs would be in relatively open positions, close to each other and their mass would be visible from all directions.
8. I note that several residents, including some from Sangers Mews, have objected to the proposal in relation to its impact on visual amenity.
9. I acknowledge the need for the appellant to provide some signage to help customers identify the site, but the scale, siting and design of advertising material proposed would be detrimental to visual amenity.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR