



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/Z/19/3242020

Rear of Morton House, Cainscross Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4HS

- 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 Clear Channel UK against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.19/1584/ADV, dated 19 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is 'upgrade of existing 48 sheet advert to support digital poster'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The site currently displays two paper and paste billboard posters running parallel to the main thoroughfare of Cainscross Road, near an entrance to busy Cainscross roundabout. No residential properties have a direct view of the site and the immediate area has a commercial feel due to a scattering of small business premises and the roundabout. Immediately beyond this extensive school grounds cause the environment to become more open in character. The well maintained 'Lake at the Lawns' park immediately faces the site and when visiting I observed that the nearest section contained a lake, wildlife area and park benches. In my opinion, this park is an attractive, comparatively wild green space in an otherwise commercial area, and on this basis, I have attached significant weight to its importance in defining visual amenity.
4. Illuminated images, changing every ten seconds, would be eye catching when viewed from the park and harmful to the visual amenity, in addition to intruding on the peaceful visual character, relative to the wider area. This would be exacerbated by the longer residence time of people in the park compared to driving past, meaning that users would be exposed to many more changing images. I have taken into consideration that I visited the site in the winter when trees provide less cover and people are less likely to amble, but have inferred that an illuminated poster would still be visible from the park in the summer, although inevitably to a lesser extent. This would be obtrusive, discordant with the character of this area, and overall cause harm to visual amenity.

5. Other advertising signs in this area of Cainscross Road are generally considerably smaller, static and associated with buildings, rather than freestanding. In this context, an illuminated and frequently changing billboard poster would dominate and change the appearance of the area, particularly after dark. While there is precedent for billboards and advertising at this location, and this is a moderately commercial area on the approach to a roundabout, this is not sufficient to outweigh or justify the harm to visual amenity identified above.
6. I have also taken into account Policies CP14, ES3 and ES12 of the Stroud District Local Plan (Adopted November 2015), which are material because together they seek to safeguard existing amenity. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal also conflicts with these policies.
7. Removal of one billboard would reduce the combined visual impact from two posters. However, there is a critical difference in tone between an entirely static, paper and paste billboard poster, to one that is illuminated and changing frequently to the extent that it introduces a different sense of character to an area, and one that in this case would be harmful to local amenity overall.

Conclusions

8. For these reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR