



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2020

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/Z/20/3245334

32, Bondgate Without, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1PN

- 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 Andrew Petherick of Pilgrim Spirit Ltd against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01785/ADE, dated 30 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2019.
 - The proposal is for 2 product banners.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Whilst I noted from my site visit that two advertisement banners were in situ this appeal has been determined on the basis of the specifics of the submitted plans.

Main Issue

3. The control of advertisements is exercisable only with respect to public safety and amenity and in this case the Council has no objection over safety. The main issue in this appeal is therefore the effect of the proposal on amenity. This would include the effect on the character and appearance of the host building and of the surrounding Alnwick Conservation Area, and upon the setting of nearby listed buildings and a scheduled monument.

Reasons

4. Located within the Alnwick Conservation Area, the appeal site enjoys a prominent roadside frontage within a commercial area, on a main route through this market town. Here the design, positioning and form of existing advertisements tend to generally reflect the character and scale of this medieval fortified town's local vernacular and sit comfortably in that context.
5. The site falls within the setting of several listed buildings, including a scheduled monument and Grade I listed building named 'the Hotspur Gateway or Bondgate Tower'. It is noted that this gated tower straddles Bondgate Without at its western end and its defensive presence and long linear approach contributes hugely to the collective significance of these important heritage assets. The architectural style and character of the appeal site contributes

- positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to the setting of nearby listed buildings and scheduled monument.
6. The proposed advertisement on the side elevation would respect the vertical emphasis of the host building. However, it would be of a scale, form and position which would uncomfortably intersect both floors of the host building and thereby appear discordant. The advertisement on the front elevation would also respect this vertical emphasis. However, it would be of a scale and form that would cover a substantial part of the porch elevation to an extent that would be overly dominant and appear similarly jarring.
 7. Both advertisements would be read directly against the gated tower and the listed buildings that flank it. This would visually intrude upon the linear approach to these assets along Bondgate Without to an extent that would be harmful to their settings.
 8. The displays would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and, for similar reasons, would detract from the settings of the nearby listed building and scheduled monument.
 9. Reference made to the obscuring of a Romanesque window serving the porch is noted. I do not have details of that feature before me. Notwithstanding my full consideration of this matter, both advertisements would still be of a scale, form and position upon the building which would not be in keeping with the building or wider street scene.
 10. The arguments advanced by the appellant, in so far as they relate to amenity, are noted. The existing advertisements referenced are not comparable, being much smaller in scale to their host building or lighting column. As they are fixed at right angles to their host, they are more akin to regimented flags which do not overly dominate or distract from this important vista. Furthermore, the matters pertaining to the material, colour palette, historical association of the content of the banners and their relationship to a local business enterprise are not sufficient to outweigh the harm arising from other features of the displays.
 11. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are relevant. Policy BE13 and Appendix D Advertising of the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (April 1997), Policies S15 and S16 of the Alnwick District Local Development Framework Core Strategy Document (October 2007) and Policies HD3, HD6 and HD7 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan 2014 -2031 (July 2017) collectively seek to secure appropriately designed proposals within this historic context. I have found that both advertisements would harm visual amenity of the area and therefore both conflict with these policies. Policy HD5 is not however relevant to this appeal given that the policy relates only to proposals beyond a Conservation Area.
 12. Both advertisements proposed would be harmful to amenity including the character and appearance of the host building, the surrounding Alnwick Conservation Area, and the setting of nearby listed buildings and a scheduled monument. Consequently, they would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Alnwick Conservation Area nor preserve the settings of the nearby heritage assets.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR