



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 May 2020

by Alison Scott BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/Z/20/3245351

Old HSBC, 19 Main Street, Ponteland NE20 9NH

- 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 Stephen Standerwick, Stonebridge Interiors, against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01525/ADE, dated 13 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 November 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is Halo illuminated letters, projecting sign and rear sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent granted for the display of halo illuminated letters, projecting sign and rear sign. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.¹

Procedural Matter

2. A number of advertisements have already been displayed on site. The signs consist of a hanging sign above the main entrance into the building, individual letters attached to the front façade, and includes a rear panel sign to be fixed to existing fenestration.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the adverts on the character or appearance of the Ponteland Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located within the commercial area of Ponteland on the arterial route through the village, and falls within the Ponteland CA. The CA consists of the prominent St Mary's Church and the open space of Coates Green adds to the significance of the CA. Traditional two storey commercial premises at ground floor of brick or sandstone construction are interspersed by more modern 20th Century buildings, set amongst a recognisable irregular pattern of frontages along Main Street. The appeal site is a modern building with accents of facing stone to the ground floor level and blonde coloured stone tile to the first floor.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

5. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
6. Both traditional timber shop fronts and modern shop frontages are in evidence within the area and most advertisements here benefit from a variety of illumination. I noticed this ranges from trough lighting systems to individual letter illumination or overhanging lamps. During my visit, I was also aware that a number of shops and business premises are void of external lighting, however, illumination of signage is a feature of the locality.
7. At the appeal site, all signage spells out the business name in their own corporate style, and all illuminated by either cool white coloured halo or internal cool white illumination, and I note the design of the advertisements, their locations, or forms of illuminations is not in contention by the parties. Furthermore, I note the comments received from the Council's Building Conservation Officer as a consultee to the proposal, raises no objections to the display of advertisements. It is the presence of continuous illumination that is in dispute by the parties.
8. I have been made aware by the Council that that some local adverts may have been granted consent before the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan 2017 was adopted, with its specific guidance intended to control illumination '*where such signs advertise goods or services available to the public within evening hours*'. Furthermore, I accept that some advertisements within the area may be unlawful. However, no information on these signs and their individual circumstances has been presented.
9. From my visit during the hours of darkness, I observed that illumination was active to the cluster of many premises that had either long since closed for business to the public or did not provide a service to the public within evening hours. My findings are therefore that due to the display of illumination to the building, set amongst other premises where illumination is a recognised feature, the character and appearance of the heritage asset has been preserved by the display of the illuminated advertisements.
10. Consequently, there is no conflict with Policy PNP 7 of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan 2017 that seeks to ensure adverts through their scale, design, number, materials and illumination, amongst other criteria, do not detract from the significance of the heritage asset.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal is allowed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR