
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2020 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Andrew Owen BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/Z/20/3248088

1-13 Greyfriars, Bedford MK40 1HJ

- 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 Samsons Ltd against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02647/ADV, dated 27 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is an electronic billboard.
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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.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on visual amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located within a town centre location and is occupied by a row of retail units on the ground floor with residential/commercial units on the first and second floors. The site is surrounded by other retail units and is adjacent to a highway. The proposed billboard would be located on an existing canopy above a fast food premises and in front of the window of the first-floor unit above it. The appellant has indicated that this window serves an office, however the Council state that it is a residential property. Notwithstanding this, the Planning Practise Guidance advises that amenity, in the context of the control of advertisements, includes aural and visual amenity, but does not extend to considerations relating to matters such as outlook. Therefore, given the powers to control advertisements set out in the Regulations, this matter is not determinative in my consideration of the appeal.
5. As well as being large in size, the advertisement would be in an elevated position above the shop and all the existing shop signage at the neighbouring units, making it highly visible to both pedestrians in the area and vehicles travelling along the adjacent road. Although the billboard would have a conventional appearance, it would be in a prominent position on the building and would be an overly dominant addition to the surrounding area. The host

building has no distinct architectural merit, however the proposal would introduce an incongruous and overly large feature to the building which is currently uniform and modest in appearance.

6. I consider that the proposed billboard would be an incongruous and dominant addition to the streetscene and I conclude that this advertisement would unacceptably harm the visual amenity of the area.
7. The Council have cited conflict with Policy 34 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (2020) and the Supplementary Planning Document 'Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas' (2005), which seek to ensure advertisements have a positive visual impact on a building and its surroundings and not obscure architectural features such as windows, 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 proposed advertisement does harm amenity, it therefore does not accord with these policies.

Conclusions and Recommendation

8. 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