
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2020

by Jillian Rann BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4718/Z/20/3244980

Mad Nevs, 259 Wakefield Road, Moldgreen, Huddersfield HD5 9BE

- 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 Ben Porte (Clear Channel UK) against the decision of Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/64/93148/W, dated 25 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is an internally illuminated 48-sheet digital display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the appeal site and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The display would be located on the side gable of a two storey building at the end of a small, terraced commercial parade. There was no existing signage on the side gable at the time of my visit. Existing signage on the front and rear of the terrace is limited in scale relative to the building frontages, with little illumination apparent. In contrast, the proposed advertisement would be of some significant height and width, and would occupy a substantial proportion of the appeal building's modest side elevation. As a result of its size, its elevated position and fully illuminated appearance, the advertisement would appear as a disproportionately large and unduly dominant feature on the existing building, and would have a significant prominence in the street scene when approaching this side of the building along Wakefield Road.
4. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) refers to the possibility that large poster hoardings may be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city where they would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site¹. The site is on the busy A629 Wakefield Road, close to Huddersfield town centre, with commercial and industrial buildings nearby. However, those buildings are interspersed with housing and landscaped areas, and the site's surroundings in this case are mixed, rather than being solely commercial or industrial in nature.

¹ Paragraph Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306.

5. Existing signs on the terraced parade beyond the site are generally limited in size and height relative to the building frontage. Other nearby commercial and industrial buildings are larger structures with fascia or individual letter signage generally proportionate to their scale, and any associated freestanding signs also relatively limited in size and height. Illumination to those existing signs, where it exists, appears to be mainly external or limited to lettering or logos.
6. In contrast, the proposed advertisement would be notably larger in area than is generally characteristic of other signs nearby, and fully internally illuminated except for its frame. Although advertisements are intended to attract attention, the display proposed in this case would therefore appear incongruously large and prominent, even in the context of existing signage nearby and other smaller or intermittent light sources such as street lighting and vehicle lights.
7. Furthermore, when travelling towards the site from the town centre, the advertisement would be viewed across a landscaped embankment, with a terrace of houses on Wakefield Road in the foreground, and against the backdrop of further rows of houses beyond the nearby junction. In that context the large, illuminated display would appear as a highly discordant feature, unsympathetic to the mixed, partly-residential character of its surroundings.
8. Due to the distance and the wide, busy main road which separate the site from the Grade II listed Bankfield Mill opposite, the advertisement would not directly affect or harm the special interest of that listed building or its setting. Nonetheless, for the reasons given, the advertisement would have an adverse effect on the amenity of the appeal building itself, and that of its wider surroundings.
9. Even if the advertisement display were switched off for several hours overnight, it would be illuminated for significant periods when ambient light levels are low, especially in winter. Limits on the level of illumination and on other matters such as the use of moving images, as suggested, would not address the harm I have identified, since its substantial size and fully internally illuminated appearance would still be evident. I have been referred to the greater flexibility and sustainability of digital advertising compared to poster advertising. However, such benefits would not outweigh the significant harm to amenity that would arise from introducing the new digital display proposed in this location.
10. The proposed advertisement would therefore have an adverse effect on the amenity of the appeal site and its surroundings. Consequently, it would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, or with the guidance in the PPG set out above. Nor would it accord with Policies LP24(a) or LP25 1(a) or (b) of the Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies, which collectively require good design and that advertisements are consistent with the character of the existing building and the locality, and which I have had regard to as further material considerations.
11. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Jillian Rann
INSPECTOR