



Appeal Decision

by **M L Milliken BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/Z/19/3243238

5A The Granary, High Street, Blakeney NR25 7AL

- 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 Michael Wright against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref ADV/19/1297, dated 6 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is 2no externally illuminated fascia signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. In response to travel restrictions currently in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I consider that this appeal can be determined without the need for a physical site visit. This is because I have been able to reach a decision based on the information already available. Having sought the views of interested parties, no formal objection has been received and I am therefore determining the appeal on that basis.
3. Notwithstanding the description of development provided on the application form as submitted, it appears from the evidence that, during the determination period, the proposal was amended by the appellant and such changes were publicised by the Council, as confirmed by the decision notice. I am therefore determining the appeal on the basis of the revised details and drawings as submitted.

Main Issue

4. The control of advertisements is exercisable only with respect to public safety and amenity. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on amenity, with particular regard to the relationship with the North Norfolk AONB, Heritage Coast and the Blakeney Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located on one of the main routes through the coastal village of Blakeney, in an area of mixed-use development, which also forms part of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. The site is also located within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
6. The host property is a Grade II Listed Building, located within the Blakeney Conservation Area (the CA). From the evidence before me, the significance of

the CA relates to, in part, the historic fabric of the village core, local topography, the uniformity of buildings and their overall scale and massing, including those situated along the Quay. Although some historic illuminated signage exists in the wider area, it does not exist within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, which benefits from a distinct nocturnal character, with limited street and other lighting present. All of these factors contribute positively to the character and appearance of the CA.

7. 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, as also outlined within Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I have also had due regard to Paragraph 172 of the Framework, which states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and Paragraph 173 of the Framework, which relates to the protection of areas defined as Heritage Coast and states that decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation.
8. The appeal proposal comprises one externally illuminated fascia sign and an externally illuminated hanging sign.
9. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan to the extent they may be material. Of particular relevance to the appeal proposal are adopted Policies SS4, EN1, EN2, EN4 and EN8 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (NNCS) (September 2008), which relate to the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment and the protection of the natural environment, and so are relevant in this case.
10. The host property is located on a corner plot, adjacent to the River Glaven. Due to the low levels of street and other lighting in the immediate vicinity, the illuminated nature of the proposed signs would be seen as incongruous in the context of the surrounding area and against the backdrop of open, clear skies, particularly the hanging sign which would be situated in a highly prominent location. As such, they would appear as disruptive, visually intrusive features in the street scene and would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. Notwithstanding the references to benefits of the proposal put forward by the appellant, these do not outweigh the specific harm I have found in this regard.
11. By virtue of their illuminated nature, the proposed signs would also fail to conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and Heritage Coast, contrary to adopted Policy EN2 of the NNCS (2008) which seeks to protect the nocturnal character of the area. For the reasons given, the proposed illuminated signs would have a harmful effect on amenity.
12. Whilst I have had regard to local examples provided by the appellant elsewhere in Blakeney, it is considered that these are not directly comparable to the appeal site, in terms of its immediate location on a prominent corner plot adjacent to the River Glaven and given the lack of illuminated signage within the immediate vicinity. Furthermore, the conservation of the CA and the preservation of nocturnal character are determining factors for me in this instance.

13. Overall, I find that the appeal proposal would have an adverse effect on amenity and therefore conflicts with the relevant development plan policies, which seek to protect local amenity, and this is not outweighed by other material considerations. It would also be contrary to the provisions set out in Paragraphs 132, 172 and 173 of the Framework, which expect that advertisements should be well-designed, in addition to attaching great weight to the conservation of AONBs and Heritage Coast.

Conclusion

14. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M L Milliken

INSPECTOR