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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2020

**by Mr M Brooker DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date:**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/H/20/3247166**

**8 Bell Villas, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 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 Stephen Finneran, S. Finneran Electrical Heating and Plumbing Ltd against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
  - The application Ref 19/04592/ADE, dated 15 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2020.
  - The advertisement proposed is 2 x illuminated projecting signs.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed in so far as it relates to the eastern most illuminated projecting sign on the front elevation of the property. The appeal is allowed in so far as it relates to the western most illuminated sign on the front elevation of the property and express consent is granted for the display of 1 illuminated projecting sign as applied for. 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 and the following additional conditions:
  - 1) The intensity of the illumination of the sign permitted by this consent shall be within that recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in its Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG 05) Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (or its equivalent in a replacement Guide).
  - 2) The sign permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates.

### Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

2. The appeal relates to two illuminated projecting signs at the first-floor level of the property facing North on to the road. The signage, one being located to the western and the other to the eastern section of the front elevation, relates to the occupation of the related offices by the company referred to in the signage.
3. The appeal site is within the Ponteland Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of "preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of a Conservation Area. This statutory duty applies in advertisement appeals in so far as it relates to the consideration of amenity.

4. I saw on my visit that the signs were in place. Thus, the development is retrospective, and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
5. The main issue is the effect of the signs on the amenity of the area, including the CA.

### **Reasons**

6. The CA is broadly based upon Ponteland's medieval core and the boundaries include the east and west access routes to the centre of the village.
7. The appeal property is located facing on to the predominantly commercial main road that passes through Ponteland which includes a variety of drinking establishments, restaurants, shops and other commercial uses. At the site visit I noted that many of these commercial properties had projecting signs on the front elevation facing on to the road.
8. The short terrace within which the appeal property is located also accommodates an estate agent's office with large fascia signage and, to the ground floor below the signs subject of this appeal, two other projecting signs and associated signage relating to the occupiers of the two ground floor premises.
9. As noted above, projecting signs and advertisements relating to the occupation of commercial premises are a feature found within this area, particularly fronting on to the busy road. Nonetheless, the appeal property and indeed the CA is characterised by a simple architectural style of a village that could become overwhelmed by the proliferation of advertaintments harming the amenity of the area including the CA.
10. Individually, each of the two projecting signs are of a modest scale and are in keeping with the appeal property. However, together and in combination with other signage on the short terrace, the signs create a cluttered appearance.
11. Turning to the illumination of the sign, I note that signs found elsewhere on the appeal property are not illuminated and that representations from Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Civic Society and the Council's Building Conservation team, referring to the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan raised concerns as to the level of illumination and whether the illumination of the sign was necessary in the evening if the business is not open at that time.
12. In support of the appeal, my attention has been drawn to the length of time that that the signage has been in place and that similar signs, relating to a previous occupier, predated those under consideration here.
13. For the reasons detailed above, I find a single projecting sign to be acceptable and clearly severable both physically and functionally from the second sign. Therefore, I intend to issue a split decision in this case and grant express consent for one projecting sign. Subject to a condition to control its brightness and linking the hours of illumination to those of the opening hours of opening of the premises to which it relates, this single advertisement would have an acceptable effect upon the amenity of the area, including the CA.
14. I have taken into account policies PNP7 of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan and C31 of Castle Morpeth District Local Plan which seek to protect amenity

and so is material in this case. Given I have concluded that a single projecting sign would not harm amenity, the proposal does not conflict with these policies.

**Conclusion**

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to 1 illuminated projecting sign and dismissed insofar as it relates to the second illuminated projecting sign.

*Mark Brooker*

INSPECTOR