



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2021

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/Z/20/3259177

The Drill, Brentwood Road, Romford RM2 5TD

- 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 Star Pubs and Bars Ltd against the decision of Council of London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref A0049.19, dated 1 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is signage labelled D (2 x on post) and E.
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Decision

1. For the reasons that follow, I dismiss the appeal insofar as it relates to signage labelled D (2 x on post). However, I allow the appeal and express consent is granted for signage labelled E at The Drill, Brentwood Road, Romford RM2 5TD in accordance with the terms of the application Ref A0049.19, dated 1 November 2019. The consent is for the five years from the date of the decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations and the following special condition:-
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved plans: OS Mastermap; 13780 – Planning Elevation AH; and 13780 – Planning AH.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council issued a split decision in which advertisement consent was granted for signage labelled A, B, C, D (1 x on-building), F and H. The description of development in the banner heading above has therefore been taken from the Council's decision notice, rather than the application form, as this defines the part of the proposal refused consent, namely signage labelled D (2 x on post) and E. I saw from my site visit that the signage labelled D (1 x post) and E that are subject of this appeal have been installed. This does not alter my approach to determining the merits of the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement signage on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterate this approach. Therefore, while I have taken account of the policies that the Council considers to be relevant to this appeal, these have not been decisive in my determination. In this instance the Council raises no concerns with regard to public safety but has refused the application due to concerns that the proposed signage would cause harm to the spacious character of the street scene.
5. The Drill Public House (the Drill) is a large two-storey detached building that returns the corner of Brentwood Road and Slewins Lane. It is adjacent to a busy roundabout and as such occupies a particularly prominent location. The Drill is opposite a small parade of local shops on Brentwood Road which continues around the corner to Heath Park Road. As you would expect, these shop units have various signs including fascia signs, hanging signs and awnings. There are also directional and low double legged advertising signs on the roundabout. I found the character of the area to be largely derived from these shop uses, their associated signage and the busy roundabout rather than a sense of spaciousness.
6. The signs labelled D are 'amenity' signs that provide information about the services that the pub provides, such as food, sport and live entertainment. The two signs would be fixed either side of an existing pole located between the corner elevation of the Drill and the roundabout. They would be positioned below, but similar in size, to the consented double sided pictorial sign for The Drill. I recognise it is important that the information shown on amenity signs is clearly visible to passing motorists and pedestrians. However, the location and size of the two amenity signs in this case, in such a visible location, and in combination with the pictorial sign, means they would be unduly prominent and clutter the appearance of the corner elevation of The Drill. Although not resulting in a particular loss of spaciousness, I find they would cause harm to the character of the street scene and the visual amenity of the area.
7. The signage labelled as E is a double legged, double sided sign that is located parallel to the Brentwood Road adjacent to the existing post sign and between two forecourt car parking bays. The sign measures 1.5m in width and 1m in height and stands around 1m from the ground. Given these modest dimensions it does not appear unduly prominent and would, to an extent, be obscured if the car parking bays were to be occupied. Further, it would assimilate well both with the signage on the building and the wider context which, as described above, is characterised by signage of various forms.
8. I am not persuaded that proposed signage would result in a 'proliferation of clutter' as suggested by the Council or set an undesirable precedent, with any future applications for advertisements considered on their own merits.
9. Insofar as they are a material consideration, I find the sign labelled E would not conflict with Policies DC61 or DC65 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Control Development Plan Document (2008) because it is a design, size and siting that maintains the character of the surrounding area and does not materially harm the visual amenity of the area. For the reasons given above, however, I do find conflict with the sign labelled D (2 x on post) and these policies.

10. For the reasons set out above, I will therefore issue a split decision, dismissing the appeal insofar as it relates to signage labelled D (2 x to the post), but allow the appeal insofar as it relates to signage labelled E. In doing so, I have attached the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations. As requested by the Council, in the interests of precision and enforceability, I have also attached a condition requiring the development to be in accordance with the approved plans.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR