
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2021 by C Glaister BSc (Hons)

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/Z/21/3268690

50 High Street, Littlehampton BN17 5ED

- 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 Ms C Casey (of Lordsdale Littlehampton Ltd) against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref LU/287/20/A, dated 2 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as a 'replacement shop front, fascia boards, shutters and shutter housing to the north and west ground floor elevations'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The description provided in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. It is clear that the appeal relates solely to the advertisements described in the decision notice as the 'retention of 2 No. internally illuminated fascia boards'. This serves to adequately describe the advertisements, and as such the appeal is considered on this basis.
4. The appeal relates to advertisements which have already been erected. As such, the appeal will be considered with regard to its retrospective status.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the advertisements on the amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The High Street along which the appeal site is located is typical of a primary retail road, with rows of various commercial premises in most cases occupying the ground-floor below areas of residential and office use. There is a diversity present in shop front design, but these generally do not diverge from the relatively subtle appearance that would be expected from an area such as this. The appeal property is a building of character and is formed of two floors, with the ground-floor element extending out beyond the rest of the property and the building which is immediately adjacent to the right.

7. The entire external appearance of the building is bright and uses bold contrasting colours to distinguish the ground-floor, fascia signs, and first-floor level. The signs themselves maintain a similarly stark appearance, with luminous red lettering contrasted against a vivid blue background. The typeface is large and bold and forms a significant part of the overall size of the fascia boards at both front and side elevations.
8. The design of the advertisements, particularly in their use of colour and the size of their font, creates an imposing and obtrusive appearance among shop fronts which are generally more muted. The advertisements are in any case considered with respect to their own individual merits. They are unsympathetic to the character of the area and are particularly poorly sited alongside the historically distinctive building of character which adjoins the appeal site to the left. For these reasons, the proposal fails to accord with the Supplementary Planning Guidance Advertisements (SPD) which encourages advertisements to relate well to the character of the locality and be appropriate in terms of scale, proportion, and detailing.
9. Even if the signs which previously existed in this location were internally illuminated, it is evident that the previous signs maintained a design which was more understated and unobtrusive in comparison to those which are proposed. The same applies to the internally illuminated signs which currently exist in the vicinity. The presence of poorly designed advertisements in close proximity would in any case not justify advertisements which are not of a high quality. Despite there being several years between now and the original date of the SPD, the general principles remain relevant and this is not seen to alter the conclusions reached in this recommendation. Whether or not the advertisements would be deemed consent if non-illuminated or were the proposal to relate to a single sign only, the appeal is considered with regard to the circumstances of the advertisements as they are. These factors, in any case, hold limited weight which would not outweigh the harm caused by the advertisements. Additionally, though the signs are statically illuminated and limited in their level of intensity, this does not mitigate the harm which is present.
10. For these reasons, the proposed advertisements cause harm to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal therefore fails to accord with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect amenity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

C Glaister

APPEAL 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.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR