



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2022

by David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/Z/21/3287231

Budgens, High Street, Henfield, BN5 9DB

- 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 Budgens against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/1470, dated 23 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 September 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is display of 2no. externally illuminated fascia signs, non-illuminated window signage and frontage signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may only be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. There is no objection on public safety grounds. Therefore the main issue is whether the signage preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Henfield Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Regulation 3(1) requires the provisions of the development plan to be taken into account as far as they are material as well as any other relevant factors. Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) require high quality design, set general development principles and aim to sustain and enhance the historic environment. Policy 14 is specifically concerned with advertisements and in conservation areas refers to the use of traditional materials and painted fascias with muted colours.
4. Henfield Conservation Area is extensive. The buildings that face the linear High Street are varied in quality and style ranging from those of significant historic value to those that make less of a positive contribution. Whilst evidently at the heart of the village, the High Street is not universally commercial as the shops and services are occasionally interspersed with residential uses. Because of this mixed character and the calibre of the built environment, the general approach to signage should be restrained in line with Policy 14.
5. The appeal property has a wide frontage and is categorised as a 'neutral' building in the Conservation Area Appraisal. It is referred to as "relatively new" but has classically inspired proportions, materials and detailing with pillars, a recessed entrance, contrasting brick features and a string course. Its design complements the early nineteenth century provincial classical style of Elm Lodge to the south which is a listed building.

6. The advertisements proposed as part of the appeal are already being displayed. The fascia signs extend across the entire width of both main elements of the building. Previously there was just a much smaller fascia sign above the shop entrance. In any event, the proposed fascia signs cut the main elevations of the building into two and add a strong horizontal element that jars with the original balanced façade. The string course is obscured. Overall these signs do not respond to the design of the building but rather work against it. Because of their width and depth they are overly brash and also spoil the harmonious relationship with the immediately adjoining listed building.
7. Therefore the signs harm the character and appearance of Henfield Conservation Area and are unacceptable on amenity grounds having regard to the policies of the HDPF.
8. There is signage at the units on the opposite side of the High Street but the building to which they are affixed is of a different age and character. Furthermore, the fascias are not as deep as those proposed. Consent was given for advertisements at the One Stop shop to the north in 2014 with a further consent given in 2017. However, whilst spanning the width of the building, those signs are more subdued and respectful of the main building. In particular, the fascia is shallower, the lettering smaller and the background colouring blends in with the shopfront of which it forms an integral part.
9. The appellant refers to the pivotal role of the store within the community as providing employment and in bolstering the viability of the village centre as a primary shopping area. However, it is not obvious why the proposed signs are required to achieve those ends rather than those that relate more sensitively to the appeal building and its surroundings. In any event, the appeal can only be decided having regard to issues of amenity and public safety.

Conclusion

10. The proposed signs are harmful to amenity for the reasons given and therefore the appeal should not succeed.

David Smith

INSPECTOR