The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2022

by J Symmons BSc (Hons) CEng MICE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/Z/22/3290056
Ben Rhydding Sports Ground, Coutances Way, Burley In Wharfedale, Ilkley LS29 8AW

- 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 Robin Snook (Ben Rhydding Sports Club Ltd) against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
- The application Ref 21/04679/ADV, dated 10 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2021.
- The advertisement proposed is an un-illuminated timber post and 5mm ply painted display boards in a triangular arrangement approx 1.8m from the ownership boundary at the back of the highway visibility splay. Only the side two faces are to be used for local advertising.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. From my visit and on the basis of the evidence before me, the sign has been erected and therefore the development is retrospective.

3. The Regulations, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. No concerns have been raised with regard to public safety and I agree with this view.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement upon the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located on the Ben Rhydding Sports Club grounds, to the north side of Coutances Way, near to the sports club's western access. It lies within the Green Belt and outside the built-up area of Ilkley. The signage frame sits behind the highway footpath and verge, adjacent to the boundary hedge next to the cricket nets and bowling green car park. From the road and footpath, the view to the north is across the car park, hedge boundaries, playing fields and mature trees. The view to the south side is over agricultural fields with hedge and mature tree boundaries. There are a number of commercial properties along Coutances Way which have a variety of advertisement signage, however these are distant and well separated from the advertisement subject to this appeal.

6. The development consists of a non-illuminated and free-standing signage frame which has two sign boards, measuring approximately 2.35m (height) x 3.1m (width). One sign board faces the traffic travelling from the east and the other sign board faces traffic travelling from the west. The sign boards carry a variety of smaller signs which advertise businesses that have sponsored the sports club.

7. Close to the development and adjacent to the northern hedge boundary, there are a number of other signs. These include a near identical sign directly next to the sports club's western access, a large school and nursery sign board to the west end of the sports ground and a small bowling green banner fixed to the onsite hedging. The road has a variety of other road signs and streetlighting, which includes an Ilkley town sign to the opposite side of the road.

8. The development is raised above the ground and hedge line to give it maximum visibility to users of the road and footpath. It is a large and prominent feature which sits in the relatively large and open space between the other existing large signs. The development is not in keeping with the countryside character of the area and distracts from the open view to the north. Its inclusion, with the other signage, clutters this area and is visually intrusive in the landscape. The development therefore has a harmful effect on visual amenity.

9. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account Policy GB1 of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2005. This seeks, amongst other matters, to control development in the Green Belt so that the quality and distinctiveness of the countryside is maintained. As I have concluded that the development harms amenity, the development conflicts with this policy.

10. The appellant has made several points in support of the development. These include that it provides an advertising income for a not-for-profit sports club, it is no different from other commercial property signs along the road, it is safely constructed, and the impacts on amenity would be less than that caused by a proposed housing development in the area. I also note the support from Ilkley Town Council. While I recognise that the pandemic will have affected other sources of income for the sport club, these factors do not provide sufficient justification to outweigh the harm identified. Furthermore, the appellant offers to reduce the signage clutter by replacing some of these with a more appropriate new information board. No details of this are provided and I therefore give this little weight in my decision.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of amenity and as such the appeal should be dismissed.

J Symmons

INSPECTOR