



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 October 2022

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X2220/Z/22/3299350

Land at Cross Road, Cross Road, Walmer, Deal CT14 9LA

- 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 Abbey Developments Ltd against the decision of Dover District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00326, dated 3 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 April 2022.
 - The proposed development is for a 2440mm x 2440mm signage board.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

2. At my site visit, I saw that the sign is in place and I note that the application has been submitted retrospectively.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the determination of this appeal are the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area and public safety.

Reasons

Visual amenity

4. The appeal site is an open field, set within a rural area consisting of gently rolling landscape. The sign is set on cylindrical supports and prominently located at the junction of Cross Road and Station Road. To my mind, given its excessive size the sign would undermine views across the open field, and would appear overly prominent in this countryside setting, thereby harming amenity.
5. I am aware that the display of an advertising sign board to promote new development is an expected and normal part of the house building process, and which may be indicative of employment and investment in the local area. I also appreciate that there have been no comments from the Public Rights of Way & Access Service, there would no cumulative build-up of signs at the site, the advert is of a temporary nature, and that it alerts local residents to the fact new development is coming. Nevertheless, such matters do not justify the inordinate scale of the proposal.

6. The appellant has provided an image of another sign in the Dover District; I have not been given any further information relating to this board and accordingly accue such evidence limited weight. In any event, other adverts would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
7. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. The scheme would not meet with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Public safety

8. I observed during my site visit the junction and roads approaching it adjacent to the sign are quiet, with good visibility and any traffic approaching the location travels at low speed and with caution.
9. The Planning Practice Guidance states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, with those proposed at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. Furthermore, it advises that the main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal can also pose a risk to highway safety.
10. Although the advert is very large, it is positioned such that it does not unduly obstruct local road signs. There is no illumination to cause a distraction or draw the eye, and as such there would be no adverse visual confusion against the backdrop of the junction. Consequently, in my view there would be no significant risk to pedestrians and road users as they approach this section of the highway.
11. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would not have a harmful effect on the public safety in the area. The scheme would meet with the objectives of the Framework.

Conclusion

12. Although there would be no material harm to public safety, the advert would be detrimental to visual amenity. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR