
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 27 October 2022

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th November 2022

Appeal A Ref: APP/D3505/Z/22/3301419

Land East of A12, Capel St Mary, Ipswich IP9 2XS

- 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 Chris Smith, Hopkins Homes Ltd against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/01790, dated 4 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is a freestanding non-illuminated pole-mounted sign.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D3505/Z/22/3301420

Land East of Ipswich Road, Stratford St Mary, Colchester CO7 6LS

- 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 Chris Smith, Hopkins Homes Ltd against the decision of Babergh District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/01789, dated 4 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is a freestanding non-illuminated pole-mounted sign.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The applications are for retrospective permission, with both signs in place, albeit that the sign proposed for Capel St Mary has been erected at Stratford St Mary and vice-versa.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the signs on the visual amenity of the locations concerned.

Reasons

4. Appeal A relates to the erection of a sign, about 3.58 m high and 2.44 m wide, mounted on two poles about 1.45 m above ground within a field immediately adjacent to the A12 as it passes Capel St Mary. The sign is sited between two clumps of vegetation and faces southbound traffic towards the end of the slip-road where local traffic joins the dual carriageway.

5. Apart from the occasional clump of vegetation next to the verge, the sign is located in an exposed roadside position with wide views of open countryside beyond. Notwithstanding the spaced-out streetlights and distant line of pylons, this side of the road offers an attractive open view over the landscape to the south east. In this position the one-off, isolated sign constitutes a prominent, intrusive and discordant feature, detrimental to the visual amenity of the area as seen by road users. The harmful impact is increased as the opposite side of the road is lined by unattractive nursery buildings and a truck depot, the latter occupied by a line of parked up trucks on the date of the site visit.
6. Appeal B relates to a similar pole mounted sign about 2.39 m high and 2.44 m wide, again about 1.45 m above ground level, sited within a field immediately adjacent to the A12/B1029 Dedham Road junction. The sign is sited behind a low hedge and faces west towards northbound traffic on the A12.
7. Whilst northbound road users see the grey coloured rear of two directional road signs in addition to the pole mounted sign, these are inevitable and it is the latter that stands out against the open landscape of the arable agricultural field behind. The A12 at this point is climbing gently up from the River Stour which increases the prominence of the sign against its pleasant farmland backdrop. The sign also lies within the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, only a few miles wide, which has the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The sign is unduly incongruous in its setting and incompatible with this designation.
8. The appellant points out that both sites were previously occupied by roadside signs and that there are examples of similar signage in various locations along the A12. However, it is not clear that these signs were or are authorised and their presence does not justify further proliferation of commercial signage along the A12 which is already an unfortunate feature of the road.

Conclusion

9. Both applications are for temporary consent, but the signs significantly harm the visual amenity of the locations concerned, the relevant test under the advertisement regulations. They conflict with Policy CN01 of the Babergh Local Plan 2006 (BLP) which requires new development to be appropriate for the location and the surrounding environment. They also conflict with paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which opposes poorly sited advertisements. In addition, the Stratford St Mary sign conflicts with BLP Policy CR02 which seeks to safeguard the landscape of the Dedham Vale AONB and NPPF paragraph 176 which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in such areas.
10. Having regard to the above the appeals should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR