

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 April 2024

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16th May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C4615/Z/24/3339459

5 Foster Street, Stourbridge, DY8 1EL

- 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 Alight Media against the decision of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P23/1425, dated 2 November 2023, was refused by notice dated 2 January 2024.
 - The advertisement proposed is the construction and display of a 6 x 3 metre LED sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The proposal is for an illuminated LED advertisement with a display screen size of 6m x 3m.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a two storey end-terrace commercial property. It is located within Stourbridge Town Centre Area of High Historic Town Value (AHHTV), characterised by the presence of significant period properties, including Listed Buildings and locally listed buildings.
 5. The surrounding area is mixed use, including shops, cafes and offices. On the opposite side of St John's Road to the appeal site is the entrance to Foster Street East, on one side of which is a bus station and the other side, a modern car show-room.
 6. The mix of modern and historic commercial buildings provides the area with an attractive and distinctive town centre character. During my site visit, I observed that, whilst there are numerous advertisements and signs in the area, these appear as necessary highway signs and as relatively modest signs associated with commercial uses and as such, generally appear in keeping with the area's attractive town centre characteristics. There are no large LED screens in the area.
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7. The proposed advertisement would be located on the prominent north-facing façade of the property, such that it would face towards people travelling along St John's Road in a southerly direction. St John's Road in this location is a busy three-lane highway with pavements to both sides of the carriageway.
8. The proposed sign would be located at first floor level and I find that the prominent location, height, large size and the LED nature of the advertisement would all combine to result in it appearing as an intrusive feature that would dominate its busy surroundings to an undue extent.
9. Furthermore, in the absence of any other such large LED advertisements in the area, the proposal would appear as an alien feature and I consider that this incongruity would exacerbate the advertisement's intrusiveness.
10. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed advertisement would be detrimental to visual amenity. It would be contrary to the Framework and to Development Strategy¹ Policies S12 and D12, which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR

¹ Dudley Borough Development Strategy (2017).