
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2024

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U2370/Z/24/3344939

Land adjacent to 87 Poulton Road, Fleetwood FY7 6TQ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Wyre Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00213/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of a digital advertising screen (D-Poster).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. This is confirmed by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance. Therefore, while I have taken into account the policies that the Council consider relevant to the appeal, they have not been decisive in my determination of it.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is part of an area of previously developed land between the blank gable end of No 87 and the former cinema and bingo hall non-designated heritage asset. The land was historically used for carparking by the hall. At the time of my visit, it was enclosed by metal fencing and used for parking, the siting of a storage container and building materials. Formerly in commercial use, No 87 is a residential property at the end of a short terrace of dwellings. Traditional terraced properties on the opposite side of the road have ground floor commercial uses with residential above and they are in the Local Neighbourhood Centre. It is a predominantly 2-storey residential townscape, albeit with locally mixed character and appearance.
5. The proposal would be a free-standing digital advertisement measuring around 6m by 3m and elevated on 2.4m high steel legs. While it would be roughly the same dimensions as the advertisement historically attached to the gable end of No 87, it would stand away from the gable end. The advertisement would be capable of displaying sequential static images. The level of illuminance would

- be controlled according to ambient light levels, with brightness decreased accordingly in low light conditions and overnight.
6. The appeal site is close to the boundary of Fleetwood Conservation Area (the CA), within the area identified as the CA buffer by the Council. However, while the advertisement would be prominent in views along Poulton Road, it would not adversely affect any key views into or of the CA. Consequently, it would not harm the character or appearance of the CA.
 7. Nevertheless, as a result of its size and the open roadside location, the advertisement would be a prominent feature. It would be highly visible and conspicuous not only to eastbound traffic along Poulton Road but also to local residents and pedestrians including those visiting the shopping parade and waiting at the bus stop. Notwithstanding that it would be viewed against the backdrop of the gable end of No 87, the large display and illuminated changing imagery would dominate the relatively low level urban townscape.
 8. The display would not be visible travelling west along Poulton Road. Moreover, due to its siting close to No 87, the rear of the advertisement would not be prominent in long views. However, by virtue of its size, height, proximity to the footway and its separation from No 87, the proposal would be a dominant and visually obtrusive feature in close-range views. It would be discordant and overbearing from the adjacent footway, both facing the display or as the proposal came into view beyond No 87. The advertisement would be jarring and poorly related to the traditional terraced surroundings. It would not contribute positively to local distinctiveness or sense of place.
 9. The advertisement formerly attached to the gable end of No 87 was apparently in place between 2009 and 2016. However, there appears to be no planning history and it was removed in 2017. It was not in any case a free-standing or digital LED display. Existing advertising in the area includes fascia signs and window displays of ground floor commercial premises, occasional and modest hanging signs, bus shelter advertisements and street signs. These are typical and in keeping with the urban, predominantly residential environment. In contrast, the proposal would be a substantially large and novel feature. By virtue of its design, size and prominent siting, it would be discordant, out of scale and poorly related to the existing signage. Existing advertisements would not assimilate it into its surroundings and neither they nor the former advertisement provide a justification for the appeal.
 10. My attention has been drawn to numerous 48-sheet advertisements elsewhere in the UK. Some are free-standing advertisements while others attach to the gable ends of properties, both in residential and commercial uses. However, the location plans and photographs do not describe the surrounding context nor the circumstances in each case, including whether or not they replaced existing advertisements that benefited from express consent. Notwithstanding their similarities, advertisements elsewhere, including in Yorkshire, Devon, London and Cardiff, are not directly comparable to the appeal location nor do they provide a visual context or a justification for the proposed advertisement.
 11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would harm amenity. Although not determinative, as I have found harm, it would conflict with policies CDMP3 and EP14 of the Wyre Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031 Adopted January 2023. These require, among other things, that proposals respect local character, having regard to matters including design, height and scale; avoid

clutter and contribute positively to attractive and coherent townscapes. It would also conflict with the design aims of the Framework.

Other Matters

12. The evidence indicates that the proposal is part of a national project to upgrade traditional advertising hoardings, which has resulted in a reduction in the number of 48 sheet poster advertisements and associated maintenance visits. However, there is little substantive evidence that any existing advertising hoardings would be removed as a direct consequence of the proposal.
13. The proposal could be used to advertise local businesses and to broadcast public and emergency messages. However, there is little evidence in relation to demand for this advertising space by local businesses, emergency services or the Council. Therefore, the benefits to the local economy or community carry little weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would harm amenity and public safety.
15. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR