



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2024

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/Z/24/3340780

Millbrook Business Park, Sybron Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3JZ

- 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 Mr Damion Thompson of Crowborough MOT Station against the decision of Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref is WD/2022/0556/ANR.
 - The advertisement proposed is 2 non-illuminated signs directing to business location.
1) Western Road. 2) Sybron Way.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description above which is taken from the application form, both the decision and the appeal were made in respect of the sign nearest to Western Road only. I have limited my assessment to that sign, therefore.
3. The Council's reason for refusal relates specifically to matters of amenity, with no objection raised on the grounds of public safety. On the basis of the evidence before me and my observations at the site visit, I find no reason to take a different view.
4. I note that the sign subject of the appeal is already displayed.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

6. The advertisement faces onto the B2100 at the edge of Crowborough, where the town begins to cede to open countryside beyond. The surroundings are characterised by mature trees and established hedgerows, indicative of the edge-of-town location, and noticeably distinct from the more urban setting found on the other side of the nearby railway bridge, closer to the town.
7. The southern edge of the appeal site runs parallel to the road and is marked by a line of tall trees, dense hedges and an unmanicured verge. Within this, the appeal advertisement is located opposite the junction between the B2100 and Western Road, a long, generally straight street which rises through the centre of an adjacent residential area. From here, the edge of the appeal site forms an

undeveloped, verdant backdrop to an attractive, traditional signpost, as well as largely screening the industrial buildings beyond. In these ways, the southern edge of the appeal site makes an important contribution to the pleasing, semi-rural character of the area, and is particularly central to the attractive vista from Western Road.

8. The advertisement is positioned entirely above the existing traditional signpost and, as a result, dominates and overpowers it, whilst also blocking views of the sky and hilltops beyond, which can otherwise be glimpsed through the trees. As a result, it is harmfully prominent and intrusive in the setting. Commercial signage is not common along the southern edge of the appeal site, and the advertisement appears incongruous in that context, jarringly at odds with the natural, leafy frontage. These harmful effects on the amenity of the area are exacerbated by the prominence of the sign from Western Road, and its erosive effect on the quality of the view therefrom.
9. The sign is in close proximity to the business park it advertises, and the nearby stretch of the B2100 includes a mix of commercial and residential uses. However, as described above, the greenery at the edge of the appeal site largely screens views of the business park, preventing it from having any significant effect on the character of the area. Otherwise, the mix of nearby uses does not result in significant or prominent buildings or facilities of an industrial or commercial character, and so does not compromise the clear edge-of-town, semi-rural feel of the area, against which I have assessed the effect of the advertisement.
10. There are other advertisements on the opposite side of the B2100 to the appeal site, notably at a car wash on the corner of Western Road. Notwithstanding the lack of evidence that these advertisements benefit from consent, in any event they do not have the same incongruence against their respective, developed backdrops as the appeal advertisement.
11. I note that a small poster has been fixed into a stake in the ground near the appeal advertisement, publicising an event now passed. Again, I have no evidence as to the lawfulness of this advertisement, but note it is far smaller, lower, and less intrusive than the appeal advertisement. In any event, the existence of other advertisements in the locality does not provide justification for a further advertisement that is harmful to the amenity of the area.
12. I recognise that the advertisement is non-illuminated. Even if, despite nearby streetlights, it cannot be seen in hours of darkness, its invasive prominence and incongruity in its setting during hours of daylight make it unacceptably harmful to amenity.
13. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the provisions of the development plan, insofar as they are relevant, have been considered. As I have concluded that the advertisement harms the amenity of the area, the scheme does not meet with the aims of saved Policy EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that development proposals do not create unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenities of the neighbourhood.
14. For the same reason, the proposal would also be contrary to the provisions of paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states,

amongst other things, that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of amenity. The appeal is dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR