



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W3330/Z/25/3360679

Three Bridges Farm, Sheppy's Cider, Wellington Road, Bradford on Tone, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 1ER

- 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 Ms Louisa Sheppy against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 07/24/0021/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of 1 no. illuminated sign at entrance to Sheppy's Cider Farm.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 1 no. illuminated sign at Three Bridges Farm, Sheppy's Cider, Wellington Road, Bradford on Tone, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 1ER in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 07/24/0021/A. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations and the following additional conditions: -
 - 1) The illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent shall be static and non-flashing.
 - 2) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent must be within that recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals for a sign within Zone E2 Rural in its Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG 05) Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (or its equivalent in a replacement Guide).
 - 3) No part of the source of the illumination for the advertisement permitted by this consent shall at any time be directly visible to users of the A38 and the source of the illumination shall be permanently screened.

Main Issue

2. The Council has raised no concern regarding the effect of the proposed advertisement on public safety. I have no reason to disagree. The main issue therefore is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a cider farm which includes a shop, restaurant and bar, museum and tearoom situated within a rural, countryside location along the A38

west of Taunton. The proposal is to erect a 4m wide by 2m high signboard illuminated by a downlit LED trough light across its width.

4. The proposed sign would be free standing on a wedge of grass to one side of the public entrance to the farm. It would be angled to face oncoming traffic approaching from the east along the A38. The Council is concerned that the sign would create an accumulation of visual clutter having regard to existing signage and would thereby detract from the visual qualities of the area.
5. During my visit I observed the existing signage. There is a double-sided hanging, projecting sign to the flank of a brick-built barn along the roadside. This is positioned well over 50m from the position of the proposed sign. Based on my own observations, when approaching the site's entrance from the east, it would be unlikely that both signs would be visible simultaneously. The new sign would be mostly seen only having once passed the hanging sign.
6. There are individually set letters to the gable end of a further brick-built barn with a logo and the farm's name at the site's entrance. These face west and are only visible to drivers approaching from this direction. The proposed sign would not be seen in the long-distance approach from this direction due to its recessed siting.
7. My impression overall is that the level of existing signage is modest and well spaced. The additional sign would add to the numbers but in a form that would be comfortable within its own setting whilst contributing little in terms of clutter when the farm business and entrance is observed in the approach from either direction. There would be no excessive proliferation of signs and therefore no harm to the visual amenity of the area.
8. I have taken account of Policies DM1 and CP8 of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy 2011-2028 and Policies D2 and D3 of the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan 2016, which between them seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would not harm amenity, there would be no conflict with any of these policies.
9. Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 advises that the visual quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. Having viewed the site of the proposed advertisement from various aspects along the A38 Wellington Road, I am satisfied that the display would appear neither poorly sited nor poorly designed within its setting.

Conditions

10. In addition to the standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations, I have had regard to those suggested by the Transport Development Group of Somerset Council. I have considered these in light of advice in the Planning Practice Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. In the interests of highway safety, I agree that conditions are required to ensure that the levels and means of luminance are properly controlled. I have amended the suggested wording where necessary to read appropriately and to reflect current and up-to-date guidance.
12. The plans clearly show the nature of signage proposed and the siting. I am satisfied that no further control of these matters by condition is necessary.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR