



Appeal Decision

Site visits made on 13 March 2026

by JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 April 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/Z/25/3376536

Wall at Unit 11/12, Weavers Wharf Shopping Centre, Kidderminster DY10 1AA

- 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 Smart Outdoor Limited against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0563/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is one wall-mounted digital display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As well as visiting the site at lunch time on 13 March, I also visited just before 2000h so I could better appreciate the site's character when it was darker

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the proposal's effect on amenity, given its proximity to the Grade II listed Slingfield Mills Main Block.

Reasons

4. Slingfield Mills Main Block (the mill) is a large former mill building from the 1860s that reflects the industrial past of the town. As well as therefore having a historic significance, it also has an architectural and artistic significance derived from the ornate detailing around its windows, gables and pediment. While it has had glazed extensions to its lower floors, these do not undermine or unduly challenge its significance as a designated heritage asset. Its northern elevation now overlooks and dominates a sizeable car park that serves a modern retail development. As a result, although its setting, when seen from here, is much changed from what it would originally have been, the open views it offers nonetheless allow the mill's detailing and impressive nature to be appreciated and experienced.
5. The modern retail development comprises a block of units that stands to the east of the mill and runs along the car park's southern side (the southern block), and then a further block that encloses the car park's eastern side (the eastern block). The design of the eastern block, with its window arrangements and metalwork, is slightly more sympathetic to the industrial past of the site when compared to the southern block. However, both are appreciably lower than the mill and are somewhat plainer. Furthermore, the advertisements displayed on them are generally confined to ground floor level, with any higher advertisements not being

particularly large. Taken together, these factors mean the blocks do not challenge the mill building unduly during the daytime or when it is darker.

6. The proposed digital display signboard would not adjoin the mill. Rather when looking from the car park, it would be separated by the passage between the mill and the southern block, and by one unit in that block. While it would be framed by the detailing on the building, it would nonetheless be at a high level, near the block's parapet and well above any existing advertisements. At 18sqm it would also be relatively large, and, with the express purpose of being primarily visible to those entering at the northern end of the car park, the clear intention is that it would be prominent. Given its size and nature, and mindful of its position at such a high level, I consider that this proposal would highlight further the modern, retail character of the locality, and be a striking feature in the mill's setting that would compete visually with that listed building, detracting from its dominance and diminishing how it was experienced as part of the town's industrial heritage. As a result, its effect on the mill's setting means it would cause harm, albeit less than substantial, to the significance of that designated heritage asset.
7. In coming to this view I consider the changes that have occurred around the mill, by comparison to when it was operational, do not necessarily justify a further erosion of its setting. I note too that the unit between the mill and the site of the proposal has a glazed corner element at first floor level. While the internal lights can be seen through these windows, in my opinion this illumination is far less dominant and noticeable than that of the intended advertisement. That unit also has a vibrant sign at ground floor level but, as that is much lower on the elevation, its impact is not as great as the proposal. Finally, I accept that this type of advertisement is often found in retail parks, but my decision on the scheme before me is affected by the presence of the listed building.
8. The proposal could be said to accord with the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development in the *National Planning Policy Framework*. That same document though emphasises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, saying great weight should be given to their conservation, and harm to a designated heritage asset by reason of development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification. I see no reason why this guidance on heritage assets should not be applied to what is before me, and in my opinion the benefits cited do not outweigh the harm identified.
9. To the west of the mill is the Slingfield Mills chimney and boiler house building, which is also Grade II listed. Again, insofar as this appeal is concerned, its significance lies in it reflecting the industrial heritage of Kidderminster and in its detailing. Although it too can be seen from the car park, it is not as dominant as the mill and is clearly an ancillary feature. Furthermore, the substantial mill building separates it from the proposed advertisement. As such, I consider that what is before me would not affect the setting of that designated asset and so would not harm its significance.
10. Finally, while having the potential to be a material consideration, Policy DM.27 in the *Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan 2016-2036*, which is the policy that specifically concerns advertisements, relates to the effect of advertisements within, on or adjacent to heritage assets. Whilst I consider that the proposal would be in the mill's setting, it is not within or on that heritage asset and the separation means

it cannot be considered to be adjacent to it either. As such, while the Council identified a conflict with that policy it has not had a bearing on my decision.

Conclusion

11. Accordingly, due to the harm it would cause to the significance of the Grade II listed Slingfield Mills Main Block as a result of its impact on the mill's setting, and in the absence of any benefits to outweigh that harm, I conclude the proposal would fail to preserve the amenity of the area. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR