
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/Z/24/3354299

Flank Wall, 59 Milton Road, Gravesend DA12 2PJ

- 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 Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 20240706.
 - The proposal is for installation of a digital advertising screen (D-Poster).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. Amenity is not defined within the Regulations, nonetheless relevant factors include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. In assessing amenity, it is reasonable to consider characteristics of the neighbourhood.
4. The appeal site comprises the flank wall of a three-storey house in a row of other dwellings that front Milton Road. The side elevation of the property looks out over a small public amenity space. There is a convenience store on the opposite side of the highway a short distance to the west, but apart from this the surrounding street scape is broadly residential in nature.
5. The digital advert would be located in a prominent position, highly visible within the vicinity to both road users and pedestrians; I appreciate these types of advertisements are now commonplace in many settlements across the country. However, this is a predominantly domestic setting, and large digital illuminated advertisements are not a prevalent feature within the context of the surrounds. I find that the scheme would represent a discordant feature and its sheer size would accentuate the impact on the street scene, contrasting with the residential character of the neighbourhood.
6. The appellant has provided images of previous signs at the site from 2008-17; I can only presume that these were unauthorised. They demonstrate the incongruous and detrimental nature of a large advert on the flank wall of the building, supporting the reasoning above. Overall, I consider that the digital screen would detract from the visual quality of Milton Road, compromising the character and appearance of the locale and failing to integrate with the setting.

7. At my site visit I observed the existing signs referenced by the appellant at Figures 3-5, including the bus-stop and pavement advertisements and other paper and internally illuminated hoardings. However, the paper hoardings are a significant distance from the appeal site, on the opposite side of the railway bridge where site characteristics differ (similar caveats would also pertain to the comparison adverts in appendix 1). The bus stop and convenience store signs are considerably smaller than the appeal scheme and are at street level; as such these other examples are not directly comparable to the proposal before me.
8. I acknowledge that the appeal site itself is not subject to any statutory landscape or historic designations and is not located within a Conservation Area. Moreover, I note the various environmental, social and economic benefits of such advertising as outlined in the appellant's grounds of appeal; for example the display technology can be easily erected with minimal engineering, would reduce the number of vehicle trips to repost the site and reduce waste from the production process associated with posters and the discarded posters going to landfill, could support emergency messaging and result in an uplift in rent and business rates. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified above.
9. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are relevant. Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Policy TC8 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 2014 and the Council's Advertisement Control policy guidelines 2020 broadly seek to resist detrimental proposals and ensure advertisements are sensitively located within the street scene and respond positively to the character of a locality. As such these are considered material considerations insofar as they are relevant to visual amenity.
10. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. The scheme would not meet with the objectives of Local Plan policies or the Framework.

Conclusion

11. In respect of the foregoing and all other issues presented, the appeal fails.

C Hall

INSPECTOR