



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 March 2010

by David Leeming

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government**

The Planning Inspectorate
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**Decision date:
10 March 2010**

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/H/09/2117823

5-6 Bridge Street, Stourport, Worcestershire DY13 8XD

- 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 Mid Counties Co-op against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
- The application Ref 09/0535/ADVE, dated 23 July 2009, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2009.
- The advertisements proposed are 3 fascia signs and a hanging sign.

Procedural Matter

1. Although the application sought consent for the 3 fascia signs with external trough lighting, the appellants have stated at appeal that they would be prepared to accept these signs without illumination. I have therefore considered this as an alternative option to the original proposal and omitted any reference to illumination in my description of the appeal signs.

Decision

2. I allow the appeal, and grant consent for the display of the 3 fascia signs and the hanging sign. The consent is for 5 years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations and the following condition: The signs hereby permitted shall not be illuminated at any time.

Main issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the visual impact of the signs at the site and within the surrounding street scene.

Reasons

4. The site is within the Stourport Conservation Area No.1. The appeal signs were all in position at the time of my site visit but were displayed without any trough lighting. Two of the fascias and the hanging sign are on the main part of the frontage. The other fascia extends along the frontage of the separate single storey building.
5. The Council's objections appear to be in respect of the increased size of the signage and to the proposed illumination. However, from the submitted photographic evidence, the signs on the main building appear to be the same size and in the same positions as those they have replaced. The other fascia sign is longer but it occupies a fascia level position on the frontage. I consider

that this latter sign and the signage as a whole is not unacceptable by reason of the increase in size of the fascia display on the single storey building.

6. As to illumination, however, although there are examples across the road of signs with external lighting, there is a noticeably restrained appearance within the town centre, with few other illuminated signs. I noticed none on the south-eastern side of Bridge Street. In this general context, although I note that there is no proposal to illuminate the hanging sign, I consider that the presence of the proposed 3 externally illuminated fascia signs, all lit by trough lighting, would result in an excessive amount of illumination at the premises. In this respect, even though on separate buildings, with the longer sign being on a frontage set back from the main building line along the street, I consider that the illumination would over-emphasise the presence of the premises after dark.
7. On the other hand, whilst they have a fairly bright blue background, the existing non-illuminated signs do not appear especially prominent in the street scene, where there is a variety of signage in various colours. Without illumination their presence would not be highlighted after dark. In such circumstances, I consider that the signs are not visually harmful in this form and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
8. I have taken into account the policies referred to by the Council in so far as they are relevant to the appeal signs. However, in the circumstances outlined above, I consider that, provided they are not illuminated, the signs are acceptable and that I should therefore permit them. My decision does not mean that similar advertisements displayed in another location would necessarily be acceptable. Each case is decided on its own merits.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the signs should be permitted, in non-illuminated form.

David Leeming

INSPECTOR