



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 February 2018

by Thomas Shields MA DipURP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 April 2018

Appeal A: Ref: APP/C3240/Y/17/3190198

Restaurant Severn, 33 High Street, Ironbridge, Telford, TF8 7AG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Daniel Drayton (Restaurant Severn) against the decision of the Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref: TWC/2017/0665, dated 15 August 2017, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2017.
 - The works are described as installation of 1 No. externally illuminated replacement restaurant sign.
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Appeal B: Ref: APP/C3240/Y/17/3190199

Restaurant Severn, 33 High Street, Ironbridge, Telford, TF8 7AG

- 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 Mr Daniel Drayton (Restaurant Severn) against the decision of the Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref: TWC/2017/0664, dated 15 August 2017, was refused by notice dated 9 October 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as: The proposed sign measures 2100mm x 700mm. Boarded with dark navy blue on light cream background the proposed signage is in line with the exterior restaurant colour scheme. Signage lettering is in dark grey. The illumination of the sign is by way of 1829mm trough light, bottom mounted and rated at 1200 Lumens and 267 candela/m².
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Although described differently on the separate application forms to the Council, and as set out in the above banner headings, both appeals relate to the same externally illuminated advertisement sign.
3. The Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2018) (LP) was adopted by the Council on 11 January 2018. As such, the former saved policies of the Wrekin Local Plan (2000), and Core Strategy (2007) are no longer extant. For Appeal A, I have taken the adopted LP policies into account insofar as they seek to implement the Act. For Appeal B, the Advertisement Regulations require that decisions should be made in the interests of amenity and public safety, and hence the LP policies are not decisive.

Appeals A and B

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the amenity of the site and the surrounding area.
5. The site is No. 33 High Street, a grade II listed building (Ref:1374906) located within the Severn Gorge Conservation Area and the UNESCO Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site (WHS). In considering the effect on amenity it is therefore necessary for me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest; whether the character or appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced, and the effect on the WHS.

Reasons

6. No. 33 is a traditionally constructed two storey late 18th century building with a painted brick front, two broad framed sash windows at first floor, modillion eaves, and a tiled roof with ridge running parallel to the road. In addition, the projecting ground floor glazed frontage and first floor sash windows are symmetrically positioned either side of the central doorway such that there is an attractive balance to the proportions, positioning and architectural detailing of the building's front elevation. All of these features are integral to the building's overall design and contribute to its special architectural and historic interest as a late 18th century building typical of those constructed at the heart of the settlement close to the Iron Bridge, and in connection with the industrial growth of the area. They thereby form part of its significance as a heritage asset.
7. No. 33 sits between two other grade II listed buildings (Nos 32 and 34) on the southern side of High Street, and together with other historic buildings around a rectangular open space on The Square, form the built-up perimeter of the historic Ironbridge market place. These also include the former Butter Market and Lloyds Bank (both grade II listed), and the Market Buildings and Tontine Hotel (both grade II* listed). They are all important contributors to the character and appearance (and significance) of the Conservation Area as the central and focal point of the settlement of Ironbridge, which evolved in tandem with the historical industrial growth of the area, and near to the grade I listed Iron Bridge structure. As such, the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within it also contribute to the significance of the WHS.
8. The two floors of the building are occupied by separate restaurants. 'Casita', occupying the first floor, has its own externally illuminated painted board sign positioned flat against the front elevation wall between the two first floor sash windows.
9. The ground floor is occupied by 'Restaurant Severn' and displays the advertisement subject of the appeal. It is a flat board sign displaying the restaurant's name and other details measuring 2.1m in width and 0.7m in height. It is positioned centrally so that it extends beyond both sides of the central doorway, and extends vertically from the lower level of the painted fascia to a point well above the fascia and the top of the flat roof.
10. I acknowledge that the appeal sign replaced a sign of similar size. However, the Council say that the previous sign did not benefit from any consent, nor

does the existing sign for 'Casita', or the signage at some of the other properties in Ironbridge referred to by the appellant. I also note the signage referred to at 'Eleys of Ironbridge', the 'Tontine Hotel' and 'Aftabs'. However, the location, historical context and signage at those properties are different to that before me in this appeal. As such, they do not add any weight in support of allowing the appeal which, as required, I must determine on its own merit.

11. I consider that the advertisement is overly large and out of scale with the modest proportions and features of the building's front elevation which it dominates. As such, it also inappropriately cuts across and hides much of the architectural detail of the relatively narrow ground floor painted fascia. Moreover, given its considerable vertical projection with no solid backdrop above the fascia and flat roof, it fails to integrate with the building's composition, appearing starkly at odds with the previously described symmetry and balance of the building's features and overall design. These visual peculiarities are further accentuated by the existence of adjacent historical buildings (Nos. 32 and 34) where primary signage is much more restrained and contained within their existing fascia.
12. Taking all of these factors together, and even without the proposed illumination, I find that the advertisement fails to preserve the special interest of the listed building identified as No. 33 High Street and its setting. Due to its prominence adjacent to the listed buildings at Nos. 32 and 34 it also detracts from their settings. As such, the harm I have identified also fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Severn Gorge Conservation Area. Additionally, in longer views from the northern side of The Square the advertisement can be seen in the same frame of view as the northern end of the grade I listed Iron Bridge. As such, it results in a degree of harm to its setting and to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ironbridge Gorge WHS. Overall, therefore, the advertisement results in harm to the significance of these heritage assets.
13. I consider that the harm I have found is less than substantial in terms of paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which advises that the harm should be weighed against any public benefits.
14. In this regard I acknowledge that advertising signage is important for the commercial viability of the business, and that in turn contributes to the vitality of the town centre as a whole which is a public benefit. However, I see no reason why alternative and effective advertising signage could not be displayed without resulting in the harm I have previously described, and hence I attach little weight to this benefit.
15. I conclude on balance that the public benefits are greatly outweighed by the harm I have identified, and the advertisement would therefore have an unacceptably adverse impact on the amenity of the area.
16. For these reasons I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Thomas Shields

INSPECTOR