
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2016

by A Napier BA(Hons) MRTPI MIEMA CEnv

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

Decision date: 23 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/Y/16/3151939

Kings Cross Railway Station, Euston Road, London N1 9AP

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2015/5393/L, dated 23 September 2015, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2016.
 - The works proposed are installation of two advertising screens on to the existing main customer information screens within the station concourse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for two advertising screens on to the existing main customer information screens within the station concourse at Kings Cross Railway Station, Euston Road, London N1 9AP in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 2015/5393/L, dated 23 September 2015, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) The works authorised by this consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A00989/01, A00989/02, A00989/03, A00989/04, A00989/05, A00989/06, A00989/07 and A00989/08.

Main Issue

2. The appeal building is a grade I listed building, which is located within the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. The listed building and Conservation Area are designated heritage assets and I am mindful of my statutory duties in these regards. The main issue in this appeal is whether or not the proposal would preserve the listed building, any features of special historic or architectural interest that it possesses, or its setting, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Conservation Area is located within central London and from the evidence before me, including the Council's *Conservation Area Statement*, I consider its importance to be largely derived from the number and variety of historic buildings, mix of uses and pattern of development within it, and its past and present role in enabling access for people and goods to and from the city. In this context, the buildings and use of Kings Cross Station make a particularly significant contribution to the character of the area as a whole. Furthermore,
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due to their scale, form, layout and design, the station buildings are important to the streetscene and their positive contribution to the appearance of the area has been enhanced by the recent redevelopment of the site.

4. The station is a grade I listed building and is of national historic and architectural interest. From the details provided, I consider that its significance is mainly drawn from its use, age, form, fabric and architectural features, as well as its important contribution to the character of the area. The refurbishment and redevelopment of the station complex has resulted in sensitive and sympathetic alterations and extensions to the historic building. These have been undertaken in such a way so as to respect its special interest whilst enabling it to continue to operate effectively as an important transport interchange.
5. The distinctive modern concourse extension links the western range of the historic station building to the Great Northern Hotel. The striking design of the extension, with its soaring lattice framework roof enclosing a sizeable area of largely open space, creates a highly distinctive sense of place that appropriately reflects its role as a busy station concourse. The proposed screens would be sited within this western concourse and, from the details provided, including the comments of Historic England, I understand that, as part of the redevelopment process, very careful consideration was given to the siting and nature of advertisements to be displayed within and around the site.
6. Currently, the extent of advertising within the concourse is relatively limited. In addition to signage directly related to the various retail concessions, advertisements screens are situated on free-standing monolith structures, together with a single screen to either side of the two banks of customer information screens (CIS). The CIS are located to each side of the projecting Booking Hall element of the historic building and are fixed to a modern metal and glazed framework, which complements the visually dominant roof structure. Although the framework partially obscures the external elevation of the western range of the historic building, the glazing allows for filtered views of part of this elevation.
7. Whilst an important and integral part of the heritage asset, in contrast to other more prominent and architecturally detailed elements of the historic building, these parts of its western elevation have a recessive and subsidiary appearance and, in comparison to other parts of the building, appear to be visually less sensitive and more functional in character. In addition, the evidence indicates that the northern part of the building is a recent replacement for part of the historic structure that was destroyed during the Second World War. Although this recent replacement complements the remainder and, as such, makes a positive contribution to the overall character of the building, I consider that this further reduces the sensitivity of this part of the elevation.
8. The proposed screens would be very similar in their design and size to the existing. Due to their proposed siting, the installation of an additional two screens, one to either end of the existing banks of CIS, would further obscure part of this western elevation, which includes windows to the first floor. However, although reduced in size, an uncovered area of the glazed framework would remain between the edge of the proposed screens and the Booking Hall projection, which would enable some visual connection with the first floor to be retained. In addition, the proposal would not materially alter views of the

second floor of the building, which is clearly visible through the glazed framework from within the concourse and enables the elevation of the western range as a whole to be readily understood.

9. As a result, I consider that the two additional screens proposed would have a minimal impact on the perception of the external elevation of the western range of the listed building and would not detract from views of its historic fabric and features. Furthermore, although smaller than existing, the gap between the proposed screens and the Booking Hall element would limit the impact of the proposal on views of this important part of the western range of the historic building and enable it to maintain its visual dominance as a key focal point within the concourse.
10. In addition, the proposed screens would be seen in the context of the CIS and the existing advertisement screens at either end. As a result, even with the dynamic illumination proposed, I consider that the proposed screens would not be unacceptably obtrusive, but would be relatively modest additions to the existing structure, which would not detract from the distinctive high quality design of this space or compete visually with the modern or historic architecture of the station building, including the dramatic roof structure of the concourse. As the proposed screens would be attached to the modern framework, the proposal would not affect the historic fabric of the building.
11. Accordingly, overall, I conclude that the proposed screens would not harm the setting or significance of the listed building, but would result in acceptable additions to the existing structure, which would appropriately preserve the building and would not lead to the loss of or damage to features of special interest. In addition, given these findings and the siting proposed, I also conclude that the proposal would not cause harm to the Conservation Area, but would appropriately preserve its character and appearance. It would not conflict with the *London Borough of Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025* Policy CS14 and the *London Borough of Camden Development Policies 2010-2025* DP25, where they seek to protect local character and appearance, including in relation to the historic environment. It would also meet the aims of paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework, to achieve high quality design, take account of the different roles and character of different areas and conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conditions and conclusion

12. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in the light of the Planning Practice Guidance. For clarity and to ensure compliance with the Guidance, I have amended some of the suggested wordings. For clarity, it is necessary that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. However, in light of this requirement and the details provided on the approved drawings, it is not necessary to apply the suggested condition regarding external materials.
13. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

A Napier

INSPECTOR