

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2016

by R Barrett BSc (Hons) MSc Dip UD Dip Hist Cons MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 7th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/Z/16/3157772

117 Western Road, Hove BN3 1DB

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (The Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Brand against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council
 - The application Ref BH2016/01700, dated 12 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal proposal has been carried. However, I cannot be assured that the appeal sign accords in every way to the appeal plans. In this case, therefore, I am determining this appeal in accordance with the appeal drawings.

Main Issue

3. Whether the appeal proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Brunswick Town Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site includes a four storey stucco building, of classical design, which sits at the junction of Western Road and Cambridge Road. The appeal building has frontages on to both roads, forming a complete architectural composition. Western Road includes commercial uses on the ground floor, with residential and other uses above. It is a lively and busy shopping street. On the other hand, Cambridge Road is residential in character, comprised of Regency terraces of four storey stucco buildings. It has a much quieter and more restrained feel. Whilst there is some variety in the type and appearance of fascias and signs in this locality, on Western Road, generally, they relate in size and colour to the building on which they sit.
 5. The appeal site is located within the Brunswick Town Conservation Area. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area is mainly residential, with some commercial uses, such as those on Western Road. It includes a planned 19th century estate of fine mainly Regency buildings which were planned, designed and laid out as a whole. For this reason, formality, order and uniformity predominate in the scale, design, fine detailing and colour of the
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- buildings. The appeal site, its scale, classical design, fine detailing and muted tones contribute to the character and appearance that I have identified.
6. The proposed sign would be a strident bright blue with large white illuminated lettering. It would dominate the lower part of the Western Road elevation of the building and would fail to relate satisfactorily to the ordered and simple character and appearance of the host building. It would appear out of place and clumsy when seen against its muted tones and its fine detailing. This would be the case, even though the lettering would be white and pick up on the colour of the windows frames above. Furthermore, the use of large illuminated letters in a modern typeface, with some variation in their detailing throughout, would fail to relate to the more traditional, restrained design of the host building. I do not accept that the size of lettering is required due to the size of the fascia sign as suggested by the appellant. The harm identified is exacerbated by the very large size of the proposed sign and the large letters within it. For these reasons, overall, the proposed fascia sign would jar in the street and would fail to make an appropriate transition from Western Road to the residential frontage of Cambridge Road.
 7. I have had regard to other signs in the Conservation Area brought to my attention. I have limited information on the circumstances that have led to them. However, notwithstanding that matter, none replicate the circumstances of this appeal in terms of their design, colour, lettering and siting on a fine building which fronts onto two streets of different character.
 8. In coming to this conclusion, I have had regard to an appeal decision relating to the same site brought to my attention (Ref. APP/Q1445/H/06/1198475), in which that Inspector allowed the sign. However, that sign had muted tones of black and white with different letters. These matters differentiate that appeal from the one before me.
 9. I have noted that the design and colour of the proposed sign accords with the corporate brand of the appellant's company and that the appellant advises of the company's contribution to the local economy generally. However, the Regulations require me to take account of amenity and public safety concerns alone.
 10. I conclude that the appeal sign would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Brunswick Town Conservation Area. This would be contrary to Brighton and Hove Local Plan (2005) Policies QD12 and HE9. These, together, seek sensitively designed and located advertisements or signs, which contribute to the visual amenity of the area and do not have any adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the building, or a conservation area.
 11. It would also fail to accord with Brighton and Hove Council Local Development Framework Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document. That document aims to raise the standard of design quality and enhance the attractiveness and local distinctiveness of the city's shopping centres and commercial areas, whilst at the same time protecting residential areas with a similar aim.

Other Matters

12. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and or public safety. Consequently, although I have taken into account the Council's planning policy, it has not been a decisive consideration in reaching my decision.
13. It is brought to my attention, by the appellant, that a building opposite is a grade II listed building (20 Western Road). However, due to the separation distance from that building, the appeal proposal would preserve its setting.
14. I have noted that the Council's internal conservation team did not provide detailed comment on the appeal application. However, I am making my decision on the basis of the Council's decision.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Barrett

INSPECTOR