

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 November 2016

by Grahame Kean B.A. (Hons), PgCert CIPFA, Solicitor HCA

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

Decision date: 09 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/Z/16/3156535
2 High Street, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 5PW

- 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 M Snooks of Robsons against the decision of Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/1962/1, dated 22 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is Display one externally illuminated wall mounted panel sign (Retention).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the banner heading above, for reasons of conciseness, I have substituted the description of the advertisement in the application form with that used by the Council in its refusal notice.

Reasons

3. The sign which is *in situ* measures about 2.29m by 1.37m and has white lettering on a blue background. It occupies a prominent site on the southern flank wall of 2 High Street at the junction with Bridge Street and Marsh Road. The sign is aluminium with vinyl lettering and externally illuminated with a LED trough light above, and across the full width of the sign.
 4. Given the siting of the sign some 4.3m above ground level, and the level of illumination, the Council does not consider it to have any adverse impact on highway or public safety. I see no reason to disagree.
 5. Robsons own 2 High Street and their offices are located over No 1 which can be seen in conjunction with the advertisement. A public benefit is said to exist in that a sign is required in this location to advertise their business. However whilst the National Planning Policy Framework supports economic growth, at Paragraph 67 it confirms that, as set out in the 2007 Regulations, the issues of amenity and public safety are the determining factors in advertisement appeals. Consequently the policy in Paragraphs 131 to 134 is not directly relevant when determining such appeals although I have taken account of the effect of the sign on the designated and non-designated heritage assets as described below.
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6. In reaching my decision, I have also considered the Development Plan policies referred to by the parties as well as supplementary guidance on locally listed buildings. Policy DM5 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan 2013 states that proposals for advertisements on buildings will be approved where they do not adversely affect the visual amenity of the area, are appropriate in scale and illumination to the locality and the host building. However, since the powers to control advertisements under the Regulations shall only be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety, the policies are not determinative of the appeal.
7. The premises are in the Pinner High Street Conservation Area (CA). S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, a duty that applies in advertisement appeals in so far as it relates to the consideration of amenity. I saw that other than fascia signs, advertisements in this part of the CA are generally quite simple and low key, in keeping with the village character of High Street.
8. The host property is an attractive three-storey commercial building with a curved façade, is locally listed and clearly has individual heritage value. The wall on which the sign is placed is a white rendered flank wall that serves to define the edge of the CA and the character of development at the rear of High Street. Whether a smaller sign may be acceptable is not a matter before me, however from what I saw on site, the sign obtrudes against its white background and in my view significantly detracts from the attractive appearance of this substantial Edwardian building on which it is placed.
9. On the flank wall there is another sign of a similar size and illumination. The appellant suggests that consent was granted for a sign on this wall, however it is understood that the existing sign replaced one that may indeed have had consent but had simpler lettering and no illumination. That previous sign has been removed and no information supplied has confirmed that consent exists for the size and type of display that is presently sited below the appealed sign.
10. The appealed sign does not face the High Street and I accept that there is a general change in character from the frontages on that street to those on Marsh Road. I disagree however that residents or passers-by would only be aware of the sign due to its relationship with Marsh Road, not the High Street. Although not listed as a key view in the CA character appraisal¹ views into the CA from Marsh Road are obtainable of the flank wall of No 2 in conjunction with substantial parts of the adjacent listed buildings Nos 4-6. I read in the CAAMS that No 4 is the remaining end wing of a house originally facing west, giving the view an added interest in my opinion, particularly as the building is among the earliest surviving in the area.² Such views of historic roofscapes and rear projections exemplify the dense grain and organic growth of High Street.
11. The duty to have special regard to preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest only applies where the grant of planning permission is being considered. However, the proximity of this listed building is a relevant factor in considering the effect of the sign on amenity. The advertisement the subject of this appeal, taken individually or cumulatively with other signs in the vicinity detracts considerably from views of

¹ Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Pinner High Street, December 2009 (CAAMS).

² CAAMS, Paragraphs 3.16, 3.45 and 3.48

the CA including not only those obtainable of No 2 and Nos 4-6, but also in views of the 19c buildings at the end of High Street opposite.

Conclusion

12. Overall and having regard to the scale and character of the historic building on which the sign is placed and the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, I conclude that its size, illumination and contrast against the plain white wall create obtrusive clutter that fails to preserve the character and appearance of this part of the CA and that of the host building. As a result the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of amenity.
13. Consequently the appeal should fail.

Grahame Kean

INSPECTOR