

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2017

by Richard S Jones BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/Z/16/3155393

73-77 Lewisham High Street, Hither Green, London SE13 5JX

- 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 Mrs Queen Appoh, BH Solicitors against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/16/096248, dated 14 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The advertisements proposed are 3 fascia signs above first floor windows; 6 small signs in between the first floor windows and 1 projecting at normal fascia height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the advertisements on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a prominent five storey Victorian terrace building situated within the commercial context of Lewisham High Street. A total of ten signs are proposed. Six are proposed between the windows at first floor level. A further three fascia style signs are proposed between first floor and second floor levels and a projecting style sign is proposed at the main commercial ground floor level.
 4. The upper floors of the front of building are attractive and finished in contrasting brickwork with a number of architectural embellishments. The proposed signage in this location would be particularly prominent given their high level positioning, and would relate poorly to the architectural features of the building and detract from its appearance. The six signs between the windows at first floor level would also partly obscure the detailing of the brick window surrounds. I do not agree therefore that the signage would be sensitively located or complement the host building.
 5. The number of signs proposed would also create a significant amount of visual clutter, particularly given the existing signage graphics applied to many of the windows over the upper floors as well as the existing signage associated with the ground floor businesses.
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6. The proposed projecting sign, which would be positioned immediately below an existing projecting sign, and, despite being of no greater depth, would materially add to the degree of visual clutter, resulting in a negative cumulative visual impact at street level.
7. My attention has been drawn to the existing signage at the Chinese Medicine Centre at No 81 Lewisham High Street and that at the International Study Centre at Lewis Grove. However, I am not aware of the planning status of the signage at these locations, which in any case serve to confirm how visually prominent the proposed higher level signs would be and the harm which would be caused to the visual amenity of the area. Moreover, whilst fascia signs may have been allowed for the previous tenant and the signs between windows may have replaced previous signage in this location, I have no evidence to this effect and the signs are no longer in place.
8. My attention has also been drawn to two appeal decisions. Whilst it is stated that the most recent decision at 452 St Ann's Road, Tottenham¹ is similar, I have not been provided with any details of the approved signage with which to compare. Similarly, I have no details of the appeal relating to Green Spice in Dartford² for an externally illuminated sign board. It is though evident that the number of signs considered for both appeals is substantially less than that currently before me. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
9. I acknowledge that the site is not located within a conservation area, but, nevertheless I find that the signs would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area, thereby conflicting with DM Policy 19 of the Development Management Local Plan and the Council's Shopfront Design Guide, A Supplementary Planning Document. These require, amongst other matters, that new shop signs should relate successfully to the architectural features and detailing of the building and to refuse permission for advertisements, banners, blinds, canopies and awnings that are considered to adversely affect the amenity and character of an area.

Conclusion

10. For these reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard S Jones

Inspector

¹ Appeal Ref APP/Y5420/Z/15/3135560

² Appeal Ref APP/T2215/H/1198242