
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2017

by Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE

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

Decision date: 31 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C5690/Z/16/3161373

Unit 8, Thurston Central, Thurston Road, Lewisham SE13 7SN

- 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 The Gym Group against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
 - The application Ref DC/16/097859, dated 9 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 1 no. fascia sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign on the elevation at Unit 8, Thurston Central, Thurston Road, Lewisham SE13 7SN as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council changed the description of application ref: DC/16/097859 to 'the display of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign'. This is an accurate description of the sign proposed which I have used in the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed sign on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a two/three storey unit located on the south side of Thurston Road. On the opposite side of the road a substantial block of apartments is currently under construction. The proposed sign would be erected on the blank north western elevation of the unit that fronts onto an access road and faces a substantial railway embankment.
 5. The unit already has non-illuminated and internally illuminated fascia signs and vinyl signs erected on the elevation facing Thurston Road that were granted consent in 2016 (Ref: DC/16/096291). The proposed sign would be approximately 5.25m wide and 2.5m high and would be reflective of the graphic design of the existing signs. Its size and design would be similar to the sign currently erected over the main entrance to the unit.
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6. Owing to the position of the unit, the sign would not be seen in views along Thurston Road from the east. The main visual impact of the sign would be in views along this road from the west, although the lateral extent of such views would be limited by the curve of the road and the railway viaduct. The apartments currently under construction to the north of the unit have primary views facing south west and as such would not have direct views of the proposed sign.
7. Oblique views would be possible but these would be limited to those apartments at the north western corner of the block currently under construction. As such, it would not cause any unacceptable harm to the outlook of the future residents of the apartment block opposite.
8. I consider that the proposed sign compliments the existing signage and would add interest to a rather bland elevation of the unit. In addition it would provide some degree of vibrancy to the area in the vicinity of access road that is enclosed by buildings and the railway embankment. The blank mass of the north western gable of the unit is capable of accommodating a sign of this size without it appearing excessive in scale, dominant or contrasting with the style of the existing signs. No architectural features of the unit would be covered up by the sign and I do not consider that it would detract from the overall design or appearance of the host unit.
9. Although the sign is proposed to be internally illuminated, my observations of the sign over the entrance door suggest that its appearance would be fairly subtle. As such, the illumination of the sign would be acceptable in this location. Moreover, illuminated signs are not unusual on sites such as this close to the town centre and in this case there several other illuminated signs in the area.
10. Having viewed the proposed position from a number of locations along Thurston Road, I am satisfied that the proposed sign would not stand out as being excessive in scale, incongruous, or unacceptably over-dominant in relation to the building or the streetscene.
11. Taking the above factors into consideration, I conclude that the proposed sign would not cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore not conflict with DM Policy 19 and DM Policy 30 of the Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (2014). These policies, amongst other things, require that all new development should attain a high standard of design that reflects local context and that new signs should relate successfully to the architectural features of the building and should not affect the amenity or character of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons and taking all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed. In doing so I note that no non-standard conditions have been proposed and I consider that none are necessary.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR