
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2017

by Caroline Mulloy BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M4510/Z/17/3166569

Land at Scotswood Road, corner of Whitehouse Road, Newcastle NE15 6BZ

- 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 Thomas Johnston, JC Decaux UK against the decision of Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/1564/01/ADV, dated 3 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is removal of existing internally illuminated sequential advertisement (measuring 6m x 3m) and internally illuminated advertisement (measuring 12m x 3m) and installation of double sided internally illuminated digital advertisements (measuring 7.5m x 5m).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on amenity.

Reasons

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
 4. The appeal site is situated to the north side of Scotswood Road, close to the junction with Whitehouse Road. Scotswood Road is a long and major thoroughfare connecting Newcastle City Centre to the west which has a number of industrial and commercial premises along its route.
 5. Two advertisements currently occupy the site which are single sided internally illuminated advertisements set in a V shape. The advertisement facing west is an internally illuminated sequential display measuring 6m by 3m. The advertisement facing east is an internally illuminated static P400 display measuring 12m by 3m.
 6. It is proposed to remove the existing advertisements and replace them with 2 back to back advertisements measuring 8.32m high by 5.45m wide comprising 'D450' static displays situated in the centre of the plot approximately 3m above the ground resulting in an overall height of approximately 11.3m. The displays would be capable of being changed automatically. The proposed advertisements would be a free standing structure supported by a single central leg. They would have a maximum illuminance not exceeding 300 Cdm² during the hours of darkness.
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7. This section of Scotswood Road has an open aspect with significant landscaping planted on the northern road verge. I noted on my site visit that there is a range of street furniture in the vicinity, particularly centred around the junction of Scotswood Road and Whitehouse Road. The street furniture includes lampposts ranging between 10-12m in height; traffic lights; directional signs and a telecommunications 'streetworks' style pole. There was only one other advertisement in the vicinity, to the east of the appeal site associated with a new housing development which given its nature is likely to be temporary.
8. The existing eastward facing sign is visible in long range views when approaching along Scotswood Road. Although large, the sign is positioned low down and is set against the back drop of the trees which sit on the bank which softens its visual appearance. The westward facing sign is smaller and set against the back drop of tall trees and is, therefore, less prominent.
9. Whilst the replacement advertisements would be smaller than the existing, they would be significantly higher. Although the lampposts on Scotswood Road are approximately 12m high they, nevertheless, appear as slim line and non-invasive features. In contrast, the advertisements would be almost as high as the lampposts and yet possess a significantly greater surface area. Furthermore, the advertisements would extend above the existing tree line, particularly on the eastern side and would, therefore, be highly visible in both directions along Scotswood Road. I consider that the proposal would have a more harmful effect on the amenity of the area than the existing signs. The illumination would draw further attention to their detrimental appearance at night.
10. Taking these factors in combination I consider that due to the height and scale, the advertisements would appear as incongruous and dominant additions in an extremely prominent position at the junction of Scotswood Road and Whitehouse Road and on a major approach to the city centre.
11. Although there are examples of internally illuminated hoardings on Scotswood Road, these are at the far end in more appropriate locations against the backdrop of a commercial setting. In contrast, the proposal is in an open, landscaped setting.
12. Policy EN1.1 of the Newcastle upon Tyne Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1998 seeks to ensure that new development meets high standards of design. Policies EN2 and EN2.1 of the UDP seek to enhance the appearance of the city from main approaches and from major movement corridors and seek to resist development which would harm views from main approaches to the city and city centre. I have taken account of these policies which seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity it would conflict with these policies.
13. Furthermore, the proposal would conflict with paragraph 67 of the Framework which states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment.
14. I have taken account of the appellant's business needs and the economic benefit of the proposal. However, in this instance any benefits are substantially outweighed by the adverse effects that would arise in such a prominent location. It is, therefore, concluded that the proposal would be harmful to visual amenity.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector