
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 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: 30 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/Z/16/3163452

Land at Waterloo Road junction of Exchange Street, Romford RM1 1AU

- 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 Insite Poster Properties Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref A0053.16, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is a 48 sheet internally illuminated digital LED advertising display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 48 sheet internally illuminated digital LED advertising display at Land at Waterloo Road junction of Exchange Street, Romford RM1 1AU 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.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on public safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located adjacent to a railway bridge abutment on the south western side of the junction of Waterloo Road and Exchange Street. This junction is a fully automated signal junction with Waterloo Road being a heavily trafficked strategic route forming part of the highway network around the town centre and Exchange Street predominantly forming an access road to the rear service yards of The Brewery Shopping Centre.
 4. The site is currently occupied by a backlight 48-sheet display and the proposed sign would be positioned identically to the exiting and would be of the same size and similar illumination. I agree with the appellant that apart from the opportunity to change static images there would be little difference between the two displays. I have no evidence to suggest that there has been any highway or public safety issues associated with the presence of the existing sign.
 5. Waterloo Road is a dual carriageway having a straight alignment in the approach to the junction with Exchange Street. As such, I agree with the appellant that the proposed display would be seen from a distance of at least 150m. Although it is subject to a 30mph speed limit I observed at my site visit
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that vehicular speeds approaching the junction from the north tend to be low due to the presence of existing signal controlled junctions serving the shopping centre that cause traffic to be heavily managed.

6. The proposed advertisement would be located to the right of the traffic signals on Waterloo Road as viewed by drivers approaching from the north. In views there would be clear separation between the advertisement and the signal heads. The proposed display would therefore not be viewed in conjunction with the traffic signals by approaching drivers and as such I do not consider that the signals would be 'lost' in the background of illumination.
7. In addition, given the fact that the sign would be viewed for a reasonable distance as drivers approach at a relatively low speed from the north, there would be adequate opportunity for drivers to assimilate the advertisement as they approach. Consequently, I am therefore satisfied that the proposed advertisement would not cause drivers to be distracted as they approach the junction along Waterloo Road.
8. Although the Council's main concern relates to the distraction that the sign could cause to drivers along Waterloo Road, I have also considered its effect on those drivers approaching the junction from Exchange Street. This road also has relatively straight alignment which similarly provides adequate opportunity for drivers to assimilate the advertisement as they approach. The display would be located to the left of the traffic signals on Exchange Street. The proposed display would therefore not be viewed in conjunction with the traffic signals by approaching drivers to any material extent. As such, the proposed advertisement would not cause an unacceptable distraction to drivers approaching the junction from Exchange Street.
9. Taking the above factors into consideration, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would not prejudice public safety. It would therefore not conflict with Policies DC32 and DC65 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2008. These policies, amongst other things, suggest that development which has an adverse impact on the functioning of the road hierarchy will not be allowed and that express consent for advertisements will only be granted where they do not unduly compromise public safety or pose a hazard to traffic.

Other matters

10. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision for an advertisement at No 59 High Street, Romford (Ref APP/B5480/Z/15/3095170). I do not have full details of the nature of the proposals or the circumstances relating to this appeal. As such, I cannot be sure that it is representative of the circumstance in this appeal. In any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.

Conclusion

11. 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 by the Council and I consider that none are necessary.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR