

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2017

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

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

Decision date: 22nd May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/Z/16/3164923

Advertising Right, 5-5a Crown Lane, Norbury, London, SW16 3JD.

- 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 Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/03459/A, dated 6 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is for the replacement of existing single sided internally-illuminated backlit 48 sheet advertising unit with single new internally-illuminated digital LED 48 sheet advertising unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The property the subject of this appeal is located within the Norwood Grove Conservation Area. It is therefore necessary for me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This designation does not prevent the display of well-sited signs of suitable size and design, particularly on commercial premises in mainly commercial areas. But a strict control needs to be maintained to ensure that outdoor advertisements do not undermine the above objectives.
 3. The Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) both make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. Whilst the Council has drawn my attention to the policies it considers relevant to this appeal, and I have taken them into account as a material consideration, the Council's policies have not, by themselves, been decisive.
 4. The appellant has submitted documentary evidence to support their contention that a large advertisement display has existed on the side wall of these premises for many years, even as far back as the 1960's. The Council, by an email on the 6 April 2017, has confirmed that the hoarding has been in place for a period in excess of 10 years. Accordingly, in my determination of this appeal I will give due weight to the consideration that, notwithstanding the outcome of this appeal, it is, as suggested by the appellant, a reasonable assumption that the existing sign would be likely to remain as a feature of the character and appearance of the area.
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Main Issue

5. I consider that the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the character or appearance of the Norwood Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is an end of terrace property, 5-5a Crown Lane. The building, which is within the Norwood Grove Conservation Area, is located on the corner of Crown Lane and Beulah Hill.
7. The proposed internally illuminated advertising hoarding would comprise a metal/GRP frame containing a 48 sheet digital LED display. It would be fixed to the western elevation of number 5-5a Crown Lane. I understand from the evidence before me that the proposed advertising hoarding would have an illuminance level of 300cd/m.
8. The proposed sign would measure some 3.0 x 6.0 metres and be fixed about 3.8 metres above ground level. It would also be hard up to the street façade of the building and partially obscuring an existing second floor window. The new sign, which would have an LED screen, would replace the existing poster panel advert of the same size and in the same location.
9. To my mind this proposed sign would, like the existing, be very large in proportion to the wall area of the building on which it would be mounted. Accordingly, I consider that it would, in a not dissimilar way to the existing, appear overly large, awkwardly sited and cramped in this context. However, its structure would have a narrower profile and therefore it would be marginally less unattractive than the existing. Nevertheless, while the minimum display time for each advertisement and the level of illuminance could be controlled by condition, the new advertisement would have ever changing displays that to my mind would make it more visually prominent than the existing static poster sign. Accordingly, despite the slightly improved external appearance of the unit itself, due to the changing display the new advertisement would nevertheless serve to accentuate the visual harm of the existing static poster advert.
10. As I observed, the site is located in a busy urban area characterised by a mix of residential and commercial properties many of which have signs, albeit generally at shopfront/fascia level. I have also taken account that planning permission has recently been granted for a retail supermarket development along with ancillary express consent for various signs on an adjoining site. Nevertheless, due to the size, siting and particularly its proposed LED display, the proposed advertisement hoarding would, in my judgement, cause significant harm and therefore the character and appearance of the conservation area would neither be preserved nor enhanced.

Conclusions

11. I conclude, for these reasons, that the proposed display would be incompatible with the conservation status of the area and detrimental to the general interests of amenity. I have considered all other matters raised but there is nothing of sufficient weight to alter my decision that the appeal must fail.

Philip Willmer
INSPECTOR