
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

by Elizabeth Pleasant DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V5570/Z/17/3168770
276 York Way, Islington, London N7 9PQ

- 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 Attic Self Storage King's Cross Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref P2016/4331/ADV, dated 3 November 2016, was refused by a notice dated 14 December 2016.
 - The signage proposed comprises 8 internally illuminated fascia signs and 1 non-illuminated hanging sign.
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Decision

1. That part of the appeal that relates to advertisement signs B, D and F is dismissed.
2. That part of the appeal that relates to advertisements signs A, C, E, G, H and I as applied for is allowed and express consent is granted for their display. 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 and the following additional conditions:
 - 1) The signs permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated between the hours of 0600 and 2300 on any day.

Procedural Matter

3. The Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, 2006 referred to in the Council's decision, has been superseded by the Islington Urban Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document, January 2017, (SPD, 2017) which has been adopted since the appeal was submitted.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal premises is a former warehouse/office building situated in a prominent location on the corner of York Way, a major distributor road, and Market Road. Residential terraces are situated on the opposite side of the carriageway with views towards the site. However, the eastern side of York Way is generally characterised by industrial/business premises which form part of a Locally Significant Industrial Site.
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6. The appeal premises have recently been refurbished. The old brickwork has been over clad and a glazed atrium incorporated which gives the building a more contemporary appearance. The refurbishment has significantly revitalised the visual qualities of the building.
7. Policy DM2.6 of Islington's Local Plan: Development Management Policies, 2013 (DMP) advises that, amongst other things, advertisements must not result in a loss of amenity. It further states that signage should be high quality, sensitive in relation to siting and the surrounding street scene, not cause visual intrusion by reason of light pollution, and be appropriate and relevant to the building. SPD, 2017 advises that fascia signs should not obscure windows or architectural details, and should be in proportion to the rest of the building. Furthermore, individual lit lettering, fascia fret cutting or 'halo' lighting may be appropriate in some cases particular on modern shopfronts.
8. Signs A and E would be sited on the fascia above the glazed atrium. The individual aluminium letters would have a simple font and are proportionate in size and positioning to the fascia upon which they would be displayed. Although they would be sited at a high level, the overall scale, form and use of the building is such that signage at this level and in this location would not appear incongruous nor unduly prominent.
9. Signs C, G, H and I would advertise the company's corporate logo. The individual letters in the logo would be applied directly to the building and, in the case of signs C and G; this would ensure that the overall composition and visual qualities of the glazed atrium would not be compromised. By reason of their design, size and positioning, each logo sign would sit comfortably within the façade of the building upon which it would be displayed. The signs would not in my view be a dominant or discordant feature on a building of this scale and in a recognised commercial location.
10. Signs A, C, G, E and H would all have their individual letters lit internally and by means of 'halo' illumination. In view of the nature of the business advertised, illumination would not be inappropriate in this location. Moreover, the method of illumination and low intensity lighting proposed would be subtle and not visually intrusive. The appellant has suggested that the illumination could be restricted to the hours of 0600 through to 2300, and I agree that to safeguard the living conditions of neighbouring residents, having particular regard to light pollution, a condition that would restrict the timing of the illumination would be both reasonable and necessary.
11. I conclude that signs A, C, G, E and H would not cause harm to the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account Policy DM2.6 of the DMP and SPD, 2017 which seek to protect visual amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would not harm visual amenity; there would be conflict with this policy or SPD, 2017.
12. Signs B and F comprise an orange LED strip mounted behind the glazing to give a neon effect. I have taken into consideration the visual interest these signs would add to the building; however they would not be directly relevant to the use and function of building. Whilst I have found that some illumination of signage would be appropriate on this building, illuminated signage is not prolific in the locality. The embellishment of the building by the neon strips proposed would conflict sharply with the existing visual qualities of the street scene, which displays a simple and functional character.

13. Sign D is a double sided mesh banner which would project from the main façade of the building. The existing properties which front onto York Way have predominantly flat facades which contribute to an uninterrupted linear street frontage. The proposed banner would appear as a discordant element within the unadorned street scene and together with the neon signs proposed would add unnecessary clutter to the building and detract from the amenity of the area.
14. I conclude that signs B, D and F would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account Policy DM2.6 of the DMP and the SPD, 2017 which seek to protect visual amenity and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm visual amenity, the proposal would conflict with this policy and SPD, 2017.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed in so far as it relates advertisement signs B, D and F and allowed in so far as it relates to advertisement signs A, C, E, G, H and I.

Elizabeth Pleasant

INSPECTOR