
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2017

by C J Ball DArch DCons RIBA IHBC

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

Decision date: 26 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K5030/Z/16/3156573
o/s 158 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4LX

- 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 JCDecaux UK Ltd against the decision of the City of London Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00260/ADVT, dated 16 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2016.
 - The advertisement proposed is an internally illuminated advertisement on a bus shelter.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area and its impact on public safety.

Reasons

3. The internally illuminated double sided LCD screen advertisement would be a freestanding but integral part of a new bus shelter replacing the existing shelter on the east side of Bishopsgate, on a pavement narrowed by an adjacent colonnade. The site is within the Bishopsgate Conservation Area and is immediately outside the grade II listed 162-164 Bishopsgate, a former fire station building. Across the wide carriageway lies the grade II listed former Great Eastern Hotel. Further north lies the grade II listed Bishopsgate institute while, to the south are the grade II listed St Botolph without Aldgate Church and 52-68 Bishopsgate. The site lies within the shared street setting of these listed buildings.
 4. The shared setting of important listed buildings within the conservation area contributes much to the distinctive character and cultural significance of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset. Altogether this means that the site is in a sensitive location.
 5. I saw that there are very few advertisements of any sort in the local area. The former fire station has had its ground floor carefully converted to retail use, with rather subtle chain store fascia signage, while the former Great Eastern Hotel is essentially devoid of conspicuous signage. This is a street scene characterised by restrained and limited advertising signage.
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6. The large illuminated advertisement screen would occupy the full height and width of the bus shelter. Facing north and south it would be a particularly noticeable and incongruous feature in this highly valued and restrained streetscape. It would make a very apparent and unacceptable visual intrusion into the street scene, causing particular harm to the setting and significance of the former fire station. The size and nature of the advertisement would cause substantial harm to the distinct historic, architectural and cultural characteristics of the area. In the terms of Framework 67, this is a poor place for such an advertisement since it would have such a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment.
7. The proposal would conflict with the Council's Local Plan policies aimed at controlling advertisements and protecting heritage assets and would not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area or the setting of the listed buildings. While there would be some associated public benefits, they would be nowhere near sufficient to justify the harm identified to heritage assets.
8. With regard to public safety, the pavement at this point is relatively narrow. Particularly because of its proximity to Liverpool Street station, it is heavily used. The incorporation of a full width advertisement screen at the northern end of the replacement shelter would reduce circulation space and impede visibility.
9. The shelter would be set back 0.6 m from the edge of the road. Pedestrian congestion and the barrier formed by the advertisement screen could encourage pedestrians to either cross the busy road at this point, risking conflict with high volumes of traffic, or to use the narrow gap between the shelter and the road, bringing them into conflict with buses and cyclists close to the kerb. I consider that the proposal would result in a significant impediment to pedestrian movement, reducing capacity at an important transport location and encouraging unsafe behaviour, resulting in a clear threat to public safety.
10. I therefore find that the proposal would conflict with the Council's Local Plan policies intended to protect public safety and to improve conditions for safe and convenient walking.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of visual amenity and public safety.

Colin Ball

Inspector