
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2017

by S Jones MA DipLP

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

Decision date: 22 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/Z/17/3169412

Evelina Children's Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital, 249 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7EH

- 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 Ms Yvonne Fortune against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref 16/06739/ADV, dated 1 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 January 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1 built up descaled stainless illuminated logo sign & 1 set of built up descaled stainless steel illuminated letters fitting on an aluminium lattice framework painted to match the terracotta coloured tiles on the building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I note that the Refusal Decision Notice from the Council omitted reasons for refusal. However, these are referred to in the officers' report. Notwithstanding that, I still have a duty to determine the appeal that has been submitted and shall proceed accordingly.
3. The appellant believes that a mistake may have been made by the Council over the location of the proposed advert. From the evidence before me in the officer's report and on the submitted plans, it is clear that the Council considered the correct location. I confirm that the location that I have considered for the proposed advert is on the north facing frontage of the Evelina building with the advert facing towards the East Wing of St Thomas Hospital on Lambeth Palace Road. It also accords with the appellant's reason that the sign is required to assist people arriving from the Waterloo direction.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposed illuminated advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. Powers to regulate advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Public safety is not a matter raised in this case.
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6. The appeal site is a large conglomeration of buildings comprising the St Thomas Hospital site, Evelina Children's Hospital is part of that complex, and it is a terracotta and steel building opposite Lambeth Palace Gardens.
7. It lies within the Albert Embankment Conservation Area, which includes the Thames riverside walk and the substantial buildings fronting onto the Thames including the St Thomas Hospital site which includes Listed Buildings Grade II at its South Wing. It abuts but is not included within the Lambeth Palace Conservation Area, and this part of the area focusses on the medieval complex of the Grade 1 Listed Lambeth Palace and its gardens and other historic buildings along Lambeth Palace Road. The two Conservation Areas are on opposite sides of the road but I consider that they have a different character.
8. As these are heritage assets they merit special consideration in the determination of this appeal, and I have a statutory duty under section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to consider the effect of the advert on the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the two Conservation Areas. I note this is also reflected in Policies Q20 and Q22 of the 2015 Lambeth Local Plan.
9. The proposed sign would be large, bright and prominent on the curve of the road from Waterloo. Despite the existing density of development on the Embankment side of the road, there is very little illuminated signage in the area as a whole, with the exception of the advertising frame near the bus shelter farther up the main road.
10. Given the lack of illuminated signage, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area because of its prominence and its discordant nature. It would thereby fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Albert Embankment CA in which it would be located and detract from the appreciation of the listed South Wing that is an integral part of the hospital complex. It would similarly fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Lambeth Palace CA opposite. However the Grade 1 listed Lambeth Palace is some distance away on the opposite side to the Evelina site and is screened by trees, and so I conclude that it would not be harmed. Any public benefits arising from improved signage are not sufficient to outweigh the harm.
11. I note that permission has been granted for a 9 storey Library in Lambeth Palace grounds close to the Evelina site. Whilst its future implementation might potentially alter the area, this is not relevant at this point as it has not been constructed.
12. I conclude that, insofar as they are material considerations in my determination of this matter, the advert conflicts with the 2015 Lambeth Local Plan Policies Q17 Q20 Q22 and the 2016 Advertisement and Signage Supplementary Planning Document.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of amenity, and the appeal should be dismissed.

S Jones INSPECTOR