



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2017

by Elaine Gray MA(Hons) MSc IHBC

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

Decision date: 11 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/Z/17/3173128

The Crown Public House, 667 Commercial Road, London E14 7LW

- 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 Clear Channel UK Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/16/03530, dated 1 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2017.
 - The advertisement is LED panel 3m high by 6m wide showing sequential static displays.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

3. The advertisement which is the subject of the appeal has been located on the end elevation of No 667, which is located in the York Square Conservation Area (CA). The Council's document entitled 'York Square Conservation Area' (the appraisal, November 2009) states that the largest houses in the CA were developed on Commercial Road, which was constructed in 1810. Land on either side was sold to speculative builders, resulting in piecemeal development that retains a period character but contrasts with the highly planned grid that characterises other parts of the CA.
4. No 667 forms part of a terrace which is characterised by commercial uses within extended premises on the ground floor, and primarily residential uses above. Despite alterations, the terrace retains its traditional architectural character, and thus makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.
5. The advertisement is located in an elevated position which primarily faces pedestrians and road users on Commercial Road and Brunton Place. In views from these roads, it is noticeably higher than the ground floor shops and commercial premises within terrace. Due to its large size, high-level position and illumination, the sign appears as a substantial and prominent feature in the local street scene. By contrast, the majority of the adjacent signage is contained at the ground floor fascia level. The overall impact of the advertising display is visually intrusive, and out of keeping with the character and appearance of the CA.

6. At the opposite end of the terrace to No 667 is a flat-roofed structure which projects forward towards Commercial Road. On my site visit, I saw that an LED advertisement panel similar to the appeal scheme has been mounted on the side elevation of that structure. On the other side of Commercial Road is a row of attractive brick townhouses, situated next to the bridge. On the end gable of that row is a large advertisement sign, which does not have internal illumination.
7. I am not aware of the planning history of these two signs. However, their presence serves to demonstrate their disfiguring effect on the historic terraces, and so these examples would not justify the further harm caused by the appeal sign. The appellant argues that the appeal sign adds light and colour to a drab commercial area. However, in my view, the sign is a garish addition which fails to complement the mellow historic brickwork and the generally restrained visual qualities of the appeal site. I note the appraisal's advice that the quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all be integral parts of the character of CAs, and that any work carried out should respect this historic character. The appeal advertisement conflicts with this advice.
8. Drawing the above factors together, I conclude that the advertisement is unacceptably harmful to the amenity of the area. In reaching this conclusion, I have taken account of the development plan as a material consideration, specifically Policy SP10 of the Tower Hamlets Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which seeks to protect and enhance conservation areas, and Policy DM23 of the Tower Hamlets Managing Development - Development Plan Document, which seeks to ensure that advertisements do no harm the character, appearance and visual amenity of the site and the surrounding area. I have had regard to the fact that Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
9. The appellant contends that the sign is needed in terms of extra business generation, and has local and wider economic benefits. However, there is little evidence before me to quantify these benefits, and so they would not outweigh the harm I have identified. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to support economic growth, this would not justify the harmful effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area.
10. I accept that the sign could be removed, but this does not mitigate its harmful impact whilst it remains in place. I accept also that it meets the relevant professional recommendations, and that light levels can be controlled, but these circumstances have not led me to a different conclusion on the main issue.
11. For the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Gray

INSPECTOR