
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 15 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/Z/17/3174762
161 Bethnal Green Road, London, E2 7DG

- 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 against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref PA/16/03754, dated 21 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of a wall mounted digital advertising display.
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Procedural Matters

1. Powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and where appropriate public safety, taking account of any material factors. The Council has drawn to my attention the policies it considers relevant to this appeal and I have taken them into account as a material consideration though they have not, by themselves, been decisive in reaching my determination.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity with particular regard to whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Redchurch Street Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The proposed advertisement would be approximately 2.5m high by 5m wide and would be situated at first-floor level on the terminating wall of No. 161 Bethnal Green Road, a four-storey end-of-terraced property. No's 123 – 159 (odd) Bethnal Green Road, which form the rest of the terrace, are Grade II listed mid/late 19th Century shops and houses with attractive traditional features.
5. The terrace is situated within the Redchurch Street Conservation Area on the city fringe and is considered to be a prominent group of buildings. The area is characterised by a tight packed group of streets with a mixture of housing, retail and former industrial buildings. Whilst the wider area does host a number of shops within a vibrant and bustling street scene, the character and

- appearance of the area changes as Bethnal Green Road moves out of the city centre and towards the appeal site.
6. The shop fronts and signage in the immediate vicinity of No. 161 have a largely traditional appearance, in keeping with the design and proportions of the surrounding heritage assets. The signage is generally of a fairly small scale and does not appear to be illuminated or dynamic thus ensuring that the heritage assets are the dominant feature.
 7. The proposed advertisement would cover a significant proportion of the width of the host wall at first-floor level, leaving only a small brick buffer. Whilst I note that a substantial amount of brickwork would remain visible above the proposed screen, the design and size of the advertisement is such that it would, nevertheless, draw the eye and appear unduly prominent. The proposed digital display would, therefore, detract from the smaller scale and proportions of the listed terrace and wider CA beyond.
 8. Furthermore, the proposed digital display would be illuminated; showing static images on rotation on an LED screen. The modern appearance of such a screen would be at odds with, and sit uncomfortably against, the more traditional shopfronts and buildings which typify the character and appearance of the area.
 9. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the proposed digital display would be visually jarring and appear as an insensitive addition. The advertisement would cause harm and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
 10. I have therefore found conflict with Policy DM23 of the Tower Hamlets Managing Development Document Development Plan Document, April 2013 (MDD) which requires advertisements within the public realm to demonstrate that they do not harm the character, appearance and visual amenity of the site and surrounding areas. The proposal also fails to comply with Policies DM24 and DM27 of the MDD which, amongst other things, seek to protect and enhance the borough's heritage assets and ensure that the design of development is sensitive to and enhances the local character and setting.
 11. The development would also be at odds with those elements of Policies SP09 and SP10 of the Core Strategy, September 2010 which aim to improve the quality of the existing streets between Tower Hamlets and the City of London and ensure that development respects its local context and townscape.
 12. I note the existence of a previous display in a similar position prior to the redevelopment of No. 161. However, each case must be treated on its own merits and the previous existence of an advertisement does not outweigh the harm I have identified.
 13. For the reasons given above, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would be detrimental to its visual amenity. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

L J O'Brien

Appointed Person