
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 24 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/17/3174710

Land adjacent Apex Storage Building, Princess Road at the junction of Moss Lane East, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AT

- 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 Mr Paul Hardy, Vivid Outdoor Media against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 115320/AOH/2017, dated 13 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 29 March 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is the instillation of a single static freestanding digital advertising display screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the proposed advertisement would have on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a paved area enclosed by railings in front of a three storey building. The proposed hoarding would be column mounted, have a vertical orientation and an overall height of 10.75m (according to the appellant's figures). The site is on the corner of an expansive cross road junction with Princess Road identified by the Council as a major radial route from the city. Three quadrants around the junction are developed with a vacant site on the south east corner containing two free standing advertisement hoardings.
4. The site's immediate vicinity has a commercial and industrial character, although there is an area of housing nearby to the west. The curved form, materials and architectural features of the part of the building immediately behind the site create a positive feature on the corner. It appears distinct from the somewhat more functional part of the building adjoining it to the south.
5. Its appearance and features are reflected in that of a similar building on the opposite corner. Together these buildings are prominent in the streetscene as a result of their corner locations and appear as a designed response to their situation opposite one another. I do not agree with the appellant that the building has no architectural merit and, whilst nor does it appear to possess any special or outstanding design or interest, from my observations it

nevertheless makes a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance and hence visual amenity.

6. By its very nature the advertisement would be eye catching and would appear materially different to other vertical features such as street furniture and buildings in the vicinity. The forward position of the sign in relation to the building behind it would result in an awkward juxtaposition between the predominantly glazed horizontal emphasis of the building's architectural features and the large, vertical expanse of the proposed sign which would interrupt views of the building. The appellant's visualisation shows the top of the sign higher than that the building in sample views. The combination of its size, height and position would result in the advertisement appearing incongruous in its setting and would harm the visual amenity of the area.
7. Whilst the considerable scale of a brewery dominates the north east corner of the junction and would frame some wider views of the sign, this has relatively little signage itself. It does not create a built context in which the proposal would appear less intrusive nor would it provide the immediate backdrop to the sign. The hoardings to the south east of the junction have a very different visual context appearing as isolated features on an undeveloped site whose back drop consists of trees and considerably more distant buildings.
8. The appellant also refers to signage on a corner building at the next major road junction to the north of the site. However, notwithstanding that its setting differs from that of the appeal site, this arrangement is also materially different as the sign is attached to the building and more readily follows the host building's scale and emphasis, occupying what the Council advise was an expanse of brickwork. Whilst there are a number of free standing hoardings in the wider area, none of those appear to be in a similar position relative to buildings. Other buildings and signage in the area do not, therefore, lead me to consider that the proposal would be acceptable.
9. The appellant's suggestion of lowering the height of the sign to that of the building behind would only have a limited effect on reducing its impact but as he points out its apparent height would change depending on the vantage point and this would not alter its fundamentally harmful effects. I am mindful that the character of the area would match the description of large buildings and main highways in an industrial or commercial area of a major city where the Planning Practice Guidance¹ (PPG) indicates large poster hoardings may not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would not dominate a group of listed buildings (the counter circumstance illustrated in the PPG), nevertheless, having considered the particular circumstances of the location and proposed siting, this does not lead me to consider that the sign would be acceptable.
10. I do not consider that the benefits the advertisement may give rise to in terms of income supporting the upkeep of the building, business rates and its contribution to the commercial activity of the outdoor advertising industry would outweigh the harm to visual amenity the sign would cause.
11. The appellant has directed me to the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) support of the economy and sustainable development in general. However, the proposal would clearly have an appreciable impact on a building

¹ Paragraph: 079, Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306.

and its surroundings and the Framework points out² that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment, circumstances I have found in this case.

12. I have taken into account Core Strategy³ Policy DM 1 and saved UDP⁴ Policy DC15 which require that effects of siting, scale, form and impact on the appearance and character of surrounding areas, and of an advertisement's effect on visual amenity are taken into account. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm visual amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.
13. For the reasons set out above, the advertisement would harm the visual amenity of the area. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

² Paragraph 67.

³ Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2012.

⁴ The Manchester Plan, the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, 1995.