



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2017

by Elizabeth Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K5030/Z/17/3180954

Outside 81 Farringdon Street, London, EC4A 4BL

- 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 Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the City of London Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00522/ADVT, dated 23 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is for the display of a single sided internally illuminated advertisement display panel on an existing telephone kiosk measuring 1.87m in height x 1.33m in width at a height of 0.57m above ground level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the scheme on the setting of Holborn Viaduct and Pavilions (grade II listed), the Hoop and Grapes Public House (Grade II listed), 26 Farringdon Street (Grade II listed) and the setting of Fleet Street Conservation Area (FSCA).

Reasons

3. Farringdon Street is characterised by its wide multi lane road flanked by a mixture of predominantly substantial modern and traditional commercial buildings. The minimal levels of advertising, signage and street furniture contributes to the open, spacious and uncluttered character and appearance of the street scene.
4. The Appeal telephone kiosk is located adjacent to the Hoop and Grapes Public House, which is one of the more modest sized buildings within the immediate area. It comprises a narrow four storey timber framed building, with a red brick façade, which dates back to the late C17th. 26 Farringdon Street is located a short distance beyond the Hoop and Grapes Public House and on the opposite side of the road. This is an ornate Flemish Renaissance style building with a red brick and stone façade and with a projecting turreted bay above the entrance. Further to the north the Holborn Viaduct and Pavilions forms a significant feature within the street scene, with its ornate cast iron detailing and granite piers.

5. To the south of the Appeal kiosk the FSCA has a variable urban grain with contrasts between broad streets and small alleys and a diverse variety of architectural styles and building ages. This includes Nos.1 – 6 Farringdon Street and No.2 St Bride Street, which are both uniformly designed brick buildings, with stone dressings and which contribute to the historic character of the FSCA and area. Views to and from Holborn Viaduct and Pavilions, including the two listed buildings between them along Farringdon Street are important to the setting of the FSCA.
6. The telephone kiosk is located towards the outer edge of the pavement, where it is clearly visible in views to the south and north along Farringdon Street. Due to its muted colour and expanses of glazing the kiosk sits comfortably alongside the entrance to 81 Farringdon Street. Whilst the advertisement on the kiosk is large, in isolation and having regard to the absence of any illumination, it does not compete unduly with the subtle advertising at the front of the Hoop and Grapes Public House.
7. Section 72(1) and of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LB&CA Act) requires that when assessing proposals for new development within a conservation area special regard shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character or appearance. Policies CS12 and DM12.1 of the City of London Local Plan (Local Plan) and policy 7.8 of The London Plan are consistent with this requirement.
8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the built environment. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that amenity is usually understood to include the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement. Also, that in areas where there are important historic and architectural features a material consideration can be whether an advertisement is in scale and in keeping with them.
9. Policy DM10.6 of the Local Plan deals specifically with advertisements. It resists excessive or obtrusive advertising and inappropriate illuminated signs. A high standard of design is encouraged along with a restrained amount of advertising, in keeping with the character of the City.
10. The supporting text to policy DM10.6 of the Local Plan advises that advertisements will not normally be permitted on street furniture as they detract from the restrained character of the City. In general, internal illumination should be visually discreet and incorporate LEDs where possible to reduce the overall bulk and energy use of signage. Particular care will be taken within the setting of listed buildings and within conservation areas, where internal illumination will not normally be permitted.
11. The main difference between the existing and the proposed advertisements is the proposed internal illumination. Notwithstanding the slimline nature of the cabinet, due to the nature and level of internal illumination proposed, the internally illuminated advertisements displayed would be both prominent and uncharacteristic when viewed from the street scene. During the evenings and the winter months the advertisement displayed would appear particularly bright and would be totally out of keeping with the more modest signage and lighting at the Hoop and Grapes Public House and the reserved and uncluttered settings of 26 Farringdon Street and the Holborn Viaduct and Pavilions. It would similarly detract from the setting of the FSCA.

12. Consideration has also been given to policies CS10, CS12 and DM12.1 of the Local Plan and policy 7.8 of The London Plan. As they seek to protect amenity, including the character and appearance of the historic environment, they are a material consideration in the determination of this Appeal.
13. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a need for every advertisement, the regulations stipulate that only amenity and public safety arguments can be considered. The points raised by the Appellant concerning the provision and maintenance of the telephone kiosks are not related to the amenity of the advertisement panel itself and so they cannot be taken into consideration.
14. I conclude that the proposed internally illuminated advertisement display panel would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the setting to Holborn Viaduct and Pavilions, the Hoop and Grapes Public House, 26 Farringdon Street and the setting of FSCA. The scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the FSCA and would be contrary to the amenity requirements policies CS10, DM10.6, CS12 and DM12.1 of the Local Plan, policy 7.8 of The London Plan and the NPPF.

Elizabeth Lawrence

INSPECTOR