The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2019

by Elaine Benson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 May 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W2465/Z/19/3220210
221 Loughborough Road, Leicester LE4 5PN

- 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 Ltd against the decision of Leicester City Council.
- The application Ref 20182185, dated 20 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 26 November 2018.
- The advertisement proposed is an advertising display measuring 6m by 3m.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The effect of the proposed display on visual amenity, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Belgrave Hall Conservation Area (CA) and the settings of Grade II listed buildings to the north of the appeal site, which are designated heritage assets.

Reasons

3. The advertising display would be a 6m wide x 3m high, non-illuminated, traditional timber frame and backboard hoarding onto which paper and vinyl adverts would be affixed. It would be located at first floor level on the south facing gable wall of No 221, an attractive late-Victorian end of terrace house. The terrace projects forward of the side elevation of the Bull's Head public house (pub), which is a corner building, thereby giving prominence to the gable.

4. The display would be viewed principally within the context of the pub, across its paved parking area which extends as far as No 221, and the former National School on the opposite side of Loughborough Road. Both buildings are also in the CA. The area surrounding the appeal site has a somewhat open character due to the width of the roads, the extensive road junction and buildings which are set back from the roads. There are also views of several mature trees. The commercial uses in the wider area do not detract from the appearance of the surrounding area.

5. The Council's CA Appraisal notes the gothic detailing on the front elevation of the terrace, which would be unchanged, and adds that its visual interest is maintained by the gable wall with its faded advertisement which was painted

directly onto the brickwork, and 2 tall chimney stacks. The Appraisal describes the terrace as a notable townscape feature. I agree with this assessment and consider that these features contribute to the significance of the CA.

6. The traces of the painted advertisement appear to be of some age and are significantly smaller than the proposed display. A larger rectangular area which includes the painted sign but extends further to its right and below is demarked by a thin white line. The proposed display would be a similar size to this area which is otherwise unpainted. However, given its appearance I do not think it reasonable to consider this to be an existing advertising display.

7. The sign would take up much of the upper gable and would appear prominent and discordant on the elevation which is within a key local view. The proposed display would totally cover the former painted advertisement, would attract the eye away from the 2 decorative chimney stacks above it and would dominate the gable. The display would therefore harm the character and appearance of the attractive buildings that surround it.

8. Turning to the effect of the proposed display on the settings of Grade II listed buildings, the nearest stand on the diagonally opposite corner of the road junction. I observed that the signage display would not be seen or experienced in the context of these buildings and given the distance between them and their orientations, I conclude that the display would preserve their settings.

9. In this decision I have considered Policy CS03 of the Leicester Core Strategy which deals with design matters. Amongst other things it requires proposals to respond positively towards their surroundings. However, the Regulations require that decisions be made only in the interests of amenity and where applicable, public safety and this is echoed by the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, the Council's policy alone cannot be decisive. However, I have taken it into account as a material consideration.

Conclusion on the Main Issues

10. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA and the listed buildings. The large scale of the display would not respect the proportions of the existing building and would dominate it. It would appear incongruous and overly prominent on the host building and would detract from the amenity of the surrounding area. I conclude that the signage would not respect its surroundings and would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA, including through the covering of the painted sign. This would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. For the reasons set out above, there would be no harm to the settings or significance of the listed buildings.

11. No public benefits of the proposal have been identified. Therefore, the identified less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset would not be outweighed.

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the advertising display would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA and would harm public amenity. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Benson INSPECTOR