
Appeal Decisions

Site visits made on 16 July 2019

by M Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 August 2019

Appeal A - Ref: APP/R5510/Z/18/3214921

Green Lane (Outside No. 31/33), Northwood HA6 2PX

- 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 British Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 65429/ADV/2018/38, dated 28 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of an internally illuminated digital LED screen to both sides of the proposed free standing InLink.
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Appeal B - Ref: APP/R5510/Z/18/3214925

Green Lane (Outside No. 74/76), Northwood HA6 2XT

- 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 British Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 65430/ADV/2018/40, dated 28 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 31 August 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of an internally illuminated digital LED screen to both sides of the proposed free standing InLink.
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Appeal C - Ref: APP/R5510/Z/18/3214330

Belmont Road (Outside Barclays Bank), Near junction with High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1JX

- 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 British Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 73945/ADV/2018/39, dated 28 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of an internally illuminated digital LED screen to both sides of the proposed free standing InLink.
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Appeal D - Ref: APP/R5510/Z/18/3214334

High Street (Outside No. 91-93), Ruislip HA4 8JB

- 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 British Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 63191/ADV/2018/41, dated 29 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2018.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of an internally illuminated digital LED screen to both sides of the proposed free standing InLink.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.
3. Appeal C is dismissed.
4. Appeal D is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

5. As set out above, there are four appeals. Each refers to a different site, however the proposal is the same for each, as is the appellant. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits.
6. The schemes seek express consent for advertisements on InLink units, which have already been permitted. I have therefore considered the matter of only the advertisements when reaching my decisions.
7. I have been referred to the Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document – Shopfronts. However, specific conflict with this document has not been identified. I have also been referred to Policy BE29 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Saved UDP Policies, however this refers to advertisements on business premises. As the proposals refer to advertisements on InLink units, I do not consider this to be directly relevant to the schemes before me. Notwithstanding this, I have identified harm below, sufficient to dismiss the appeals.

Main Issues

8. The main issue raised in each appeal is the effect of the proposal on amenity.

Reasons

Appeals A and B

9. The sites are located along Green Lane, Northwood, which is a wide street with wide footways and there are generally commercial uses at ground floor level. They also lie within the Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area (the CA). The surrounding commercial uses at each site help to define the character and significance along the length of Green Lane as an attractive urban street, which the Council describes as having “an attractive village type atmosphere”.
10. There is an existing phone kiosk at each site, with a rotating poster advertising panel to their rear. I also noted that there was limited street furniture in the surrounding area, but where this was present it included other advertisements, one of which was digital.
11. The proposed advertisements, during the daytime, would not in my view be particularly prominent or obtrusive features within the context of other nearby advertisements, some of which change their display, albeit currently by rotating poster advertisements. There is also an existing digital display near to one of the locations which would mean that the digital nature of the proposed advertisements would not be alien in the context of the street.

12. That being said, in hours of darkness, the illuminated digital displays would be very prominent features in the street. I consider that this prominence would only be exacerbated by the changing nature of the illuminated displays. There would be a material increase in the prominence of the advertisements over and above that of the existing, given the location of advertisements on both sides of the InLink unit, whereas currently advertisements are only located to one side of the existing units.

Appeal C

13. The site is located along Belmont Road which is a particularly wide urban street, near to the town centre area of Uxbridge. The Council state that the commercial nature of this area is "fairly low key". The site lies within, but on the edge of, the Old Uxbridge/Windsor Street Conservation Area (the CA), which stretches to the north. The CA contains traditionally proportioned and detailed buildings which positively contribute to its character and appearance. Within the CA there is also a general lack of advertising, other than on shopfronts.
14. The existing kiosk at the site that is to be replaced with the InLink has an advertising panel to one side. However, the proposed digital advertisement would be located to both sides of the InLink.
15. The advertisement would, during daylight hours, not be overly prominent in the street scene and neither would the digital nature of the display be at odds with the urban context. However, I find that during darkness it would be a strident addition to the street and an overly prominent feature, notwithstanding nearby commercial properties. The positioning of displays to both sides of the units, together with the illumination and changing nature of the advertisement, would result in an unacceptable and harmful prominence, in an area which lacks an overabundance of advertising.

Appeal D

16. The site is located along High Street, Ruislip, which I found to be a busy and bustling urban street lined with commercial premises. There are generally wide footways with some existing street furniture, but this was not extensive. I also noted the presence of some advertisements, particularly on bus shelters, as well as a digital advertisement further along the street. The site lies within the Ruislip Village Conservation Area. The Ruislip Village Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the High Street as a "busy and traditional high street" with "interesting architectural detailing and decoration". The appraisal also identifies that a negative change has taken place through signage that is inappropriate in terms of, amongst other things, the degree of illumination. The presence of street trees also contributed to an attractive street scene.
17. In common with the appeals above, there is an existing kiosk at this site which has an advertising panel to one of its sides. However, despite it being larger than that which is proposed, this has a relatively minor impact on the appearance off the street.
18. Conversely, the proposed digital advertisement, located on both sides of the InLink would, in the hours of darkness, have a significant visual effect. In light of the identified negative effect some signage has had previously, particularly

in regard to illumination, I am conscious that this would result in further harm, notwithstanding the presence of an existing digital display nearby.

Overall findings

19. Each of the advertisements would result in both sides of the InLink units having advertisements on them. In all cases this would be an increase from the existing single facing advertisements. Whilst the existing advertisements are also illuminated, the digital nature of those proposed would materially and harmfully increase this during the hours of darkness, such that they would be uncharacteristic of their surroundings, even when taking account of existing advertisements.
20. Thus, each of the advertisements would have an adverse effect on the amenity of the areas within which they would be. In all cases, this would include failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in which they would be located.
21. I note the reference to controls over the luminance of the advertisements, however this does not overcome the concerns as I have outlined above. Whilst I also note the presence of shop signage within the vicinity of each site, the proposals don't comprise shop signage and as such, would not be viewed as contrasting harmfully with it at each location.
22. I have taken into account Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies, Policies BE4 and BE27 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Saved UDP Policies and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan. These seek to maintain the quality of the built environment, to conserve and enhance Hillingdon's distinct and varied environment, to ensure development preserves or enhances the visual qualities of conservation areas, that advertisements do not materially harm the visual amenity of an area and that development affecting heritage assets should conserve their significance; and so are material in these cases. Given that I have found above that each of the proposals would result in harm to amenity, they would also conflict with these policies. There would also be conflict with the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, in these regards.

Other Matters

23. I have been provided with information in respect of anti-social behaviour associated with the use of InLink units together with the potential benefits of the units. However, as the schemes before me concern advertisements on units that have already been permitted, this information has little bearing on my decisions.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that all of the appeals should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR