



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2019 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Andrew Owen MA BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/Z/19/3230532

R/O Priory Lodge, Nightingale Place, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 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 Mr S. Wilbraham of London Reclaimed Brick Merchants against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0422/ADV, dated 28 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is the erection of advertising hoarding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the erection of advertising hoarding as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located between the existing railings that are sited on top of the wall that runs along the northern side of the Rectory Road dual carriageway(A412) and the closed boarded fencing that is located to the south of Priory Lodge. Directly to the west of the site lies the railway bridge that crosses over Rectory Road. The Rickmansworth national rail and underground station is situated to the south of the site, on the opposite side of the dual carriageway.
5. The proposed advertisement hoarding would face Rectory Road which is flanked on both sides by high concrete walls. Although there are no other commercial advertisement hoardings in the immediate vicinity, I do not find that the proposed advertisement would appear incongruous. Despite the presence of Victoria Mansion and Priory Lodge, the nature of this area is generally utilitarian, as a result of the dual carriageway, railway bridge and

high concrete walls. Indeed, it would not be unusual to observe advertisements abutting a busy dual carriageway such as this one.

6. I also find that the character of the surrounding area is distinctly separate from the town centre to the south, referred to in the Officer Report, which has low-key signage and advertising. It is starker and visually less attractive and therefore not comparable to the town centre.
7. Although meant to draw the eye, the proposed advertisement would not be excessively large, obtrusive or prominent, when seen against the trees behind. Furthermore, although I find the proposed colouring of the advertisement would stand out and would somewhat contrast with the vegetation that lies behind the site, this would not unacceptably harm the visual amenity of the area.
8. The thick bushes and mature trees which lie in-between the site and Priory Lodge act as effective screening to the flats behind. Due to this screening and the distance between the site and the ground floor of Priory Lodge I do not find that the proposed advertisement would appear dominant or result in a loss of outlook for the existing occupiers there. I note the suggestion that some of these trees may be removed in future to increase light to Priory Lodge, but I have no substantive evidence on this so must consider the proposal in its current context. Similarly, due to the screening and distance to the neighbouring flats to the east of the site on Victoria Road, I do not find that the proposed advertisement will appear dominant or negatively impact the outlook of these neighbouring residents either. Furthermore, there are no residential properties to the south of the appeal site which would have direct views of the proposed advertisement.
9. The proposed advertisement would block the view of the smaller bushes and trees. However, the large and tall mature trees would still be visible and would maintain the verdant background to the site. Although the advertisement may inhibit the growth of some of the trees, it is unlikely it would impact the majority of the larger trees and bushes and so the character of the area would be retained.
10. Therefore, the display of the advertisement would not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account policies CP1 and CP12 of the Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy which seek to ensure proposals are designed to be appropriate within their context and do not harm the amenity of the area, as well as policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document which seeks to protect trees and hedgerows. As I have found that the proposal would not harm amenity it would accord with these policies.

Other Matters

11. I note concerns raised regarding the effect of the advertisement on highway safety however the Highways officer and the Council considered the proposed advertisement would not adversely affect highway safety or its operation, and I see no reason to disagree on this matter.
12. Furthermore, concerns regarding access to the rear of Priory Lodge to carry out the works are not a planning matter and do not affect my view that the advertisement is acceptable.

Conditions

13. The Council suggested imposing a condition specifying the relevant plans, in addition to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations. I have phrased the decision above so that it relates to the advert as applied for and as such it is unnecessary to place a condition on the consent identifying the plans.

Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR