



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2019

by Colin Cresswell BSc (Hons) MA MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/19/3236996

Land Adjacent M40, Westway, London W9 3NW

- 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 Infinity Outdoor Limited against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04116/ADV, dated 20 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as "display of one double sided advertising structure incorporating two portrait digital advertisement displays of 7.5m x 5m including logo boxes".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposed advertising sign would be situated on the southern side of the Grand Union Canal, next to a footpath which is also used by cyclists. This part of the footpath is visually dominated by Westway, a busy road elevated high above ground level on a concrete flyover. There is also a tall graffiti covered boundary wall which runs parallel to the footpath at this point. Together, these elements create a rather harsh and imposing setting for the canal.
4. Yet despite this, the canal and its associated footpath are of high visual quality. They provide a corridor of open space within an area that is mainly dominated by tall buildings and structures. Pleasant features such as boats, wildlife and waterside greenery are in direct contrast to the harsh appearance of Westway and the nearby bus depot. As such, the canal area maintains a very different character from its immediate surroundings.
5. I appreciate that the proposed sign would be viewed against the backdrop of the concrete flyover and the graffiti covered wall. However, users of the footpath would also see the sign at ground level in the context of the canal which has its own distinct character. From this perspective, the sign would tower high above the footpath, introducing yet another imposing feature which would further distract from the character of the waterside.

6. Although the base would be relatively slim, the sign itself would be broader and highly noticeable, especially as it would be illuminated. It would be particularly prominent in longer distance views when approaching from the north-west, reducing the sense of openness along this corridor. The overall effect would be to erode the character and appearance of the canal area.
7. I note that the appellant has offered to landscape the site on which the proposed sign would be located. This bushy area was overgrown and litter strewn at the time of my site visit. Yet whilst landscaping would offer some visual benefits, it does not help to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified above.
8. I conclude that the proposed advertisement would have an unacceptable effect on visual amenity. Among the policies quoted by the Council, Policy DES 1 of the Westminster Unitary Development Plan is of particular relevance. The overall objectives of this policy are to encourage good standards of design and to promote local distinctiveness. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with these aims. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Colin Cresswell

INSPECTOR