



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: 13 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/19/3236748

Outside 211 Harrow Road, London W2 5EH

- 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 Thomas Johnston against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04567/ADV, dated 11 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is one single sided internally illuminated digital advertisement on a specially designed supporting leg.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposed sign would be situated next to Harrow Road on a grassy triangle of land containing some decorative trees. This section of Harrow Road has dual carriageways on both sides and appears particularly busy, with traffic merging into different lanes at this point. In addition, the A40 (Westway) looms high above ground level on a concrete flyover. This runs next to the site before crossing over Harrow Road further to the east. Due to the dominance of the concrete flyover, hard surfaces and traffic, the street scene here maintains a rather harsh and functional appearance- particularly when looking down Harrow Road in an easterly direction.
4. However, the character of Harrow Road rapidly changes to the north-west. Immediately beyond the grassy area and decorative trees of the appeal site is a more pedestrian friendly street scene. Among other things, there is a health centre, garage, housing and a busy group of shops. While the street scene has a distinctly modern appearance, this section of Harrow Road is far more attractive than the area further to the east. Street trees help to soften the appearance of hard surfaces, while shops and building entrances provide more features of interest. It seems to me that the appeal site, with its grass and trees, is more visually associated with this part of Harrow Road.
5. The proposed sign would face oncoming traffic heading in a north-westerly direction along Harrow Road. Standing near the health centre and looking

south-east towards oncoming traffic, the back of the sign would appear as a plain, blank rectangle supported by a metallic post. Although not a particularly attractive addition to the street scene, the back of the sign would not appear out of keeping when viewed against the plain and functional backdrop of the concrete flyover and the dual carriageways of Harrow Road.

6. However, when approaching the site from an easterly direction, the sign would be seen against the backdrop of the residential and shopping area further along Harrow Road, to the north-west. The visual prominence of the sign would be exacerbated by its physical size and illumination, which would appear out of context against the trees and buildings immediately behind it. The site is a short distance from Royal Oak train station and on my visit I noted that the pavement here is well used by pedestrians, who would be visually exposed to the front of the sign as they pass by. In my view, the sign would appear unduly dominant in this location, especially for pedestrians, and would undermine the qualities of the street scene.
7. Although national planning policy aims to promote economic activity, including advertising, it also seeks to achieve good design. In this case, the design of the sign is not so innovative that it outweighs the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified above.
8. I conclude that the proposed advertisement would have a harmful effect on visual amenity. It would conflict with Policy DES8 of the Westminster Unitary Development Plan, which seeks to ensure that signs and advertisements are compatible with the townscape. There would also be conflict with Policy S28 of Westminster's City Plan, which promotes good design.
9. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Colin Cresswell

INSPECTOR