



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U5360/Z/19/3241447

59-65A Worship Street, Hackney, London EC2A 2DU

- 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 Junkyard Golf London against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hackney.
 - The application Ref 2019/3198, dated 29 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 November 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'new signage scheme'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's decision notice describes the proposal as 'Installation of 1 x internally illuminated projecting sign and window decals'. This is a fuller and more accurate description than that entered on the application form and used in the banner heading above, and I have considered the appeal on that basis.
3. At my site visit, I observed that some of the advertisements proposed were in place on the site, but I have determined the appeal with regard to the details shown on the submitted plans and information.

Background and Main Issue

4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) and the National Planning Policy Framework make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. The Regulations state that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.
5. The Council have raised no objections in respect of public safety, and having assessed the proposal I see no reason to disagree. The main issue in this appeal is therefore the effect of the proposed advertisements on the amenity of the area, including the setting of the South Shoreditch Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

6. The appeal site is outside of but adjacent to the South Shoreditch CA, which includes buildings opposite the site. The character, and thus significance, of the CA derives much from the rich mix of buildings of differing scales and grandeur which are set around an irregular street network, and the many and assorted

- uses present contribute a varied and thriving atmosphere. Further significance arises from the listed buildings within the CA, including those within the row at 91-105 Worship Street which are visible from the appeal site.
7. The site is part of a modern mixed-use building of up to 14 storeys in height with predominantly glazed elevations which is encircled by Worship Street, Appold Street, Snowden Street and Vandy Street. The appeal relates to the part of the ground floor level of the building closest to Vandy Street, and the site runs the full depth of the building from the entrance along Worship Street. Other buildings along Worship Street, both within and outside of the CA, are a mix of scales and designs. They are mostly in office use, although there are some more mixed commercial uses present at ground floor levels. Together with the buildings' typically generous fenestration, this provides for activity and interest at street level. A number include advertising signage and fascias to their frontages, but illumination is not a common feature of the street scene.
 8. The appeal proposes the application of vinyl decal panels to the outside of the windows and doors to the site fronting Worship Street, Vandy Street and Snowden Street. The decals would have a coloured speckled pattern with a mix of black and transparent backgrounds, and would include a logo or text at their base. Additional text, logos or arrows would be applied to a few of the main panels. Positioned above the entrance from Worship Road would be an internally illuminated projecting sign.
 9. The proposed decals would be set within the existing window and door frames and so would not disrupt the rhythm or proportions of the building. The majority of each would comprise a subtle speckled pattern on a plain black or transparent background, and would be discreet in appearance while adding some visual interest. The proposed text, logos and arrow would be brightly coloured, but the majority would be small and those of larger scale would be few in number. The overall visual impact would thus be fairly limited, particularly as they would be seen against the building as a whole. Moreover, a range of branding or external finishes are visible to buildings nearby, and some such as at the Queen of Hoxton are notably colourful. Given these factors, I find that the decals would be relatively unobtrusive features which would not be overly conspicuous or unsympathetic, both individually and as a whole.
 10. Where the decals would have transparent backgrounds, views would be maintained into the interior of the building from the street scene, and there would be a continued perception of activity. Views into the building would be restricted where the decals would have black backgrounds. However, these would be balanced with transparent panels along Worship Street and Vandy Street and so would not obscure the entire façades which are closest to the CA and nearby listed buildings. I accept that the rear part of the façade to Vandy Street would comprise a run of decals with black backgrounds. Nevertheless, given the scale of the building the transparent panels towards the corner with Worship Street would also be visible alongside these, and so a degree of animation to Vandy Street would be retained.
 11. To Snowden Street, the decals would have black backgrounds and so views into the appeal site would be more limited. However, neither Snowden Street nor Finsbury Market or Vandy Street which it adjoins carry vehicular traffic and they are of short length. As a consequence, these have more of a feel of side streets, a character that is further reinforced by the limited fenestration

present along the south side of Snowden Street and Finsbury Market. The more limited active frontage would not therefore be uncharacteristic here. Moreover, the proposal would affect only a short part of the Snowden Street façade which is also screened to views from the CA by the building.

12. Taking these factors together, I am satisfied that the sense of vibrancy and activity that the appeal site contributes to the street scene would not be unacceptably harmed, and the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the nearby CA and listed buildings would be preserved.
13. However, neither projecting signs nor illumination are common features in the street scene close to the appeal site and where present, projecting signs are typically understated in their scale and design with limited illumination. In contrast, the scale, design, illumination and colour of the proposed sign above the entrance of the appeal site would all serve to draw attention, and it would stand prominently from the frontage of the building with Worship Street. It would be particularly notable at night, given the limited illumination of other advertisements in the vicinity. Combined, these factors would cause the proposed sign to be an intrusive and unsightly feature which would be out of keeping with the street scene and other signage in the area, and which would be unsympathetic to the setting of the adjacent CA and nearby listed buildings. The detrimental impact that the sign would therefore have on the character and appearance of the street scene and the setting of the adjacent CA and listed buildings would cause harm to visual amenity.
14. I note other signage in the area, including examples referred to by the appellant. However, I saw none that were comparable in terms of their overall scale and extent of illumination to the sign proposed to the appeal site and their presence does not therefore mitigate the harm to amenity that would flow from the proposed projecting sign.
15. While I find that the vinyl decals would not be detrimental to the amenity of the area, I conclude that the projecting sign would cause unacceptable harm to visual amenity. I have taken into account Policies 24 and 25 of the Core Strategy 2010, policies DM1, DM28 and DM29 of the Hackney Development Management Plan 2015 and policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan- The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011 which, together, broadly seek to secure a high standard of design which respects the character of an area and which conserves and enhances the historic environment. Given I have found that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Other Matters

16. I note disappointment expressed by the appellant that the Council did not raise concerns with the proposal before refusing consent, but this is not a matter which affects my consideration of the planning merits in this appeal.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR