



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4605/Z/19/3241937

Land adjacent Longbridge Technology Park, Bristol Road, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2TS

- 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 Booh Media Plc against the decision of Birmingham City Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/07018/PA, dated 19 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of roadside digital sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework both make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. Whilst the Council has drawn my attention to the policies it considers relevant to this appeal, and I have taken them into account as a material consideration, the Council's policies have not, by themselves, been decisive.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a soft landscaped verge between the public highway on Bristol Road and office buildings at Longbridge Technology Park. The area is predominantly commercial in character and Bristol Road is a heavily trafficked dual carriageway. Existing street furniture close to the appeal site includes street lighting columns, a bus stop shelter and directional signage. Whilst there is commercial signage to this section of Bristol Road, this is predominantly associated with commercial units on the opposite side of the road.
5. The soft landscaped verge makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area softening the visual transition between the Technology Park and the public highway. It is currently free of commercial signage. The proposal would introduce a tall and bulky advertisement within this area. Its prominence would be increased by virtue of the internal illumination and the varying static images that would be displayed. Consequently, the scale, design and position of the advertisement would dominate the street scene and would

appear incongruous on this side and section of Bristol Road. Existing trees within the landscaped verge would not assist in screening the advertisement to the point that it would successfully integrate with its immediate context.

6. My attention has been drawn to Paragraph 079 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Whilst I accept the character of the area is generally commercial, the PPG does not advocate that all advertisements will be acceptable in such areas. In this particular instance, the specific characteristics of the appeal site mean that an advertisement of the design and scale proposed would adversely affect the visual amenity of the area.
7. To conclude the advertisement would harm the visual amenity of the area, and would be contrary to the Development Plan and specifically Policy PG3 (Place Making) of the Birmingham Development Plan (2017) and saved paragraph 3.14D (Good Urban Design Principles) of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (2005), which amongst other things seek high design quality and that regard will be given to the local character of an area. These policies therefore seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. For the same reasons, the proposal would be contrary to the provisions of paragraph 132 of the Framework.

Other Matters

8. My attention has been drawn to examples of advertisements, including a freestanding digital sign in the central reservation of Bristol Road and a large poster sign on Tyburn Road. The immediate context of these signs is not identical to the appeal site and they do not persuade me that the advertisement subject of this appeal would not harm the visual amenity of the area.

Conclusion

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

M Russell

INSPECTOR