



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2020

by Alison Scott BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Z/19/3241863

980 Great West Road, Brentford, London TW8 9GS

- 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 the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00505/W/AD27, dated 8 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is Display of two doublesided advertising structures incorporating four portrait digital advertisement displays of 7.5m x 5.0m with ten second sequential advertisement changes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The site is located within the grounds of the landmark GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) office site that sits adjacent to the elevated and heavily trafficked M4 flyover. The double-sided free-standing digital adverts are proposed to be raised above the flyover and visible to traffic from both east and westbound directions. They would be internally illuminated with an overall height of approximately 7.5m and a width of some 5m, and positioned over 19m off the ground.
4. Whilst the appeal site is located on a major transport route, it shares a close physical and visual relationship with nearby Boston Manor Park that is divided in two by the M4 motorway. Boston Manor Park forms part of the Grand Canal and Boston Manor Conservation Area (CA). The southern part of the CA's surroundings is adjacent to the GSK building. The CA is significant for its waterways of canals and industrial growth escalating in the early nineteenth century, and respective housing expansion, with the Great West Road becoming a spotlight for major industries in the 1920's
5. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

6. As set out in the Regulations¹, advertisements should be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. Therefore, as the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains, if the locality where an advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, consideration should be given to whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.
7. The Grade 1 Listed, Boston Manor House including the Grade II Listed Stables building is surrounded by its original gardens. Boston Manor Park contains various pedestrian pathways and promenades, with key viewing and focal points identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal 2017. There are other heritage assets within close proximity to the site. As such, the context of the appeal site is highly sensitive.
8. Digital advertising is not an uncommon feature along this part of the M4, although the existing free-standing adverts are closely associated with the group of high, large-scale buildings to which they stand against. They have been amalgamated into the existing street-scene and highway network. These other adverts do not share the same relationship with the adjacent CA to which the appeal adverts are closely associated.
9. In the locations where the adverts are proposed, the context of the area opens out to the west, is much less dense in character, with a greener setting as the M4 is carved out over Boston Manor Park and the playing fields beyond, where it leaves the urban scene behind. The proposed advertisements would therefore be physically separated from the other adverts. Therefore, in this proposed location, they would introduce new and discordant features into the surroundings. The structures would be visible from long views except from the south, and, moreover, from key public vantage points within Boston Manor Park. Even taking the urban scale context into account, the signs would appear as an excessively large, inharmonious feature, that would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area.
10. Moreover, the adverts would not be assimilated within the bulk of the road structure and the large LED display would further amplify their presence. Part of the base of the advertisement would be screened by existing fencing and landscaping, albeit leaf cover would be reduced in winter months, however, this factor would do little to reduce the apparent height and bulk of the main advertisement display.
11. Furthermore, given the location of these adverts and close association with the CA, and Boston Manor Park's contribution as the historic park of Boston Manor House, the setting of Boston Manor House and stables would be compromised by the introduction of these new features. I therefore conclude that the appeal proposal would have a harmful effect on amenity, it would detract from the setting of the listed buildings and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
12. Whilst the Council have expressed an emphasis on the on-going regeneration of this area of Brentford, the details of this are not before me to comment upon. However, as I dismiss this appeal, this requires no further consideration.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

13. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material. Consequently, the signs are contrary to Policy CC1 and CC4 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015-2020 which requires development to recognise context and character and to conserve and take opportunities to enhance features that contribute to an area's character as well as heritage assets. Also, of particular relevance to this appeal is Policy CC5. This Policy seeks adverts to be well designed and, to be sensitively located to not adversely impact on the setting of heritage assets. The proposal is also contrary to provisions of paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework that states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Conclusion

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

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR