



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2020 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Zoe Raygen Dip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/Z/20/3244197 328 Chester Road, Old Trafford M16 9EZ

- 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 Global against the decision of Trafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 98655/ADV/19, dated 23 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is the upgrade of 1 no. 48-sheet advertisement hoarding to digital LED display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Council has drawn my attention to a number of policies and guidance it considers to be relevant to this appeal and I have taken them into account where relevant. However, powers under the Regulations¹ to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterates this approach.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area, including the character and appearance of the host building and the Empress Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The proposal seeks permission for the replacement of an existing internally illuminated 48 sheet poster advertisement, elevated on the gable end of No 328 Chester Road, with a digital, illuminated advertisement.

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

6. The site is within the Empress Conservation Area (the CA), the special interest of which stems from the surviving historic sections which convey the story of the area's industrial development and in particular the three distinct building types which reflect their use and purpose: residential, industrial and office. The Empress Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document SPD 5.17a, Conservation Area Management Plan (October 2016) (the SPD) identifies the appeal building as a positive contributor within the CA, as it retains a number of original features and classical proportions and is a good example of the much-lost terraced housing which was prevalent in the area.
7. The immediate locality is of a predominantly industrial character therefore advertisements and other signage are not uncommon in the surrounding area. However, they are generally of a much-reduced scale, set at lower levels and limited to the confines of the commercial premises. It is acknowledged there are billboard advertisements located within close proximity to the appeal site. Whilst they are of a comparable scale to the appeal proposal, they are positioned at street level. All the above factors help limit the visual impact of the existing advertisements. Large illuminated advertisements occupying raised positions are not therefore characteristic of the area.
8. The scale and positioning of the proposal would be similar to the existing poster advertisement, however it would vary significantly as it would display digital images. Whilst the images would be static, they would change on a sequential rotation and would be significantly sharper images to those currently displayed. All these factors would cause the proposal to be more prominent and overly dominant in the street scene than the existing advertisement.
9. The host building is on the northern edge of the CA therefore the gable wall where the advertisement is proposed fronts away from the CA. Nevertheless, the appeal site is positioned adjacent a busy thoroughfare therefore the proposed advertisement would be highly visible in southerly views as you travel along Chester Road towards the CA. It would also be read within the context of the façade of the appeal building, which makes a positive contribution to the CA as a whole. Therefore, due to its scale, positioning and design, this proposal would read as a highly prominent and incongruous feature that would detract from the historic and architectural characteristics of the appeal building and its wider surroundings.
10. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would not include a change in current illumination levels and the brightness could be adjusted and controlled via conditions. For the reasons noted above, I am not persuaded that the existing advertisement is visually comparable to the appeal proposal, irrespective of illumination levels. Therefore, any measures to reduce illumination would not negate the harm that I have identified to the effect on the visual amenity of the area.
11. It is acknowledged that this proposal would see the upgrade of the existing advertisement casing and the removal of the platform which is used for attaching the advertisements. This would be of some visual benefit however it is of a limited scale which therefore limits the weight that is afforded to this matter. As such, this benefit does not outweigh the harmful aspects of the proposal as set out above.
12. Therefore, for the reasons above, I conclude that this proposal would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and the host building. It would therefore

fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Empress Conservation Area. As such, it would conflict with guidance in the Framework, policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan, Core Strategy (January 2012) and guidance within the SPD and Planning Guidelines, Advertisements (July 1995) which, although not decisive, collectively seek to ensure developments are appropriate in their context and improve the character and quality of an area and do not detract from the aesthetic value of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hannah Ellison

Appeal Planning Officer

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Zoe Raygen

INSPECTOR