



Appeal Decision

Unaccompanied site visit made on 20 May 2020

by K Savage BA MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/Z/20/3244202

Land at Savile Street and Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LD

- 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 Ben Porte (Clear Channel UK) against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03493/HOARD, dated 23 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 November 2019.
 - The advertisement proposed is a digital display measuring 6m by 3m.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposed advertisement would be a freestanding digital display mounted on support poles within a fenced area of land at the corner of Savile Street and Spital Hill. The advertisement would stand a maximum of 5.8 metres above the ground. The display would face roughly north-east toward the adjacent intersection where it would be widely visible to pedestrian and vehicular traffic approaching from the north on Spital Hill and from the east on Savile Street.
4. In these views, the display would appear in the foreground of the Grade II* listed Wicker Arches and the wider arched viaduct. The listing describes the structure as an outstanding example of monumental early railway architecture, with particular note drawn to the elliptical central arch over the roadway, flanking footway arches with Tuscan pilasters, and the viaduct of twelve, round-headed arches with voussoirs to the north-west. A number of the arches have been infilled to create commercial premises, some in unsympathetic materials; however, the arches remain striking and dominant features of the townscape with considerable architectural and historic significance evoking Sheffield's industrial heritage which is evidenced in their listing at Grade II*.
5. The appellant points to the area being defined as a 'Priority Office Area', to the site being adjacent to a principal highway and not within a conservation area. I recognise that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) refers to industrial or commercial areas of a major city with large buildings and main highways as an example of an area where large poster hoardings may be permitted, but this is subject to them not adversely affecting visual amenity. Moreover, the PPG also

provides the contrary example of a large hoarding being refused where it would dominate a group of listed buildings.

6. In this case, the arches' presence in the townscape is heightened by the relative openness of the surroundings due to the large intersection and wider road network. As well as a townscape feature, the viaduct is a physical and visual focal point for those travelling along Savile Street and Spital Hill and underneath the main arch. The display would stand immediately in front of the first viaduct arch and next to the main roadway arch in a prominent and conspicuous position. It would be seen in direct context with the central arches across a wide vista, including the approaches along both Savile Street and Spital Hill. The contemporary nature of the display, with changing digital images, would appear particularly strident in front of the 19th century viaduct architecture. Moreover, its height and freestanding form would add to its incongruous presence and harmful impact on the setting of the listed buildings.
7. I acknowledge that there are existing adverts displayed around the appeal site, including on the facades of the infilled arches of the viaduct and on other buildings. However, these are mainly of a non-illuminated banner or fascia type and relate directly to the premises upon which they are placed, or in the case of the nearby digital display on Savile Street, are seen only when travelling away from the listed building. Even having regard to their cumulative effect in wider vistas, they have limited overall presence in the street scene and are not comparable to the proposed advertisement in form, location or visual impact. For these reasons, the proposal would adversely affect the setting of the listed buildings and the wider streetscape, and would harm the amenity of the area.
8. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, in accordance with the Regulations. For the reasons set out, there would be conflict with Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (March 1998), which permit large poster advertisements only where, among other things, they would not affect the setting of a listed building and would not harm the character of the area, and which generally seek to preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of listed buildings. I also find conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.
9. The Council accepts that there would be no adverse impact with respect to public safety; however, this is a neutral consideration weighing neither for nor against the development.
10. In reaching a view, I recognise that the digital display would generate economic activity through the sale and display of advertisements, though given the proposal relates to a single display, the benefits of this would be limited in scale and would not outweigh the identified harm to amenity.

Conclusion

11. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR