
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2020 by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/20/3248230

661 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester M12 4QA

- 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 Clear Channel UK against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 125208/AOH/2019, dated 11 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 February 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is the upgrade of existing 48 sheet advert to support digital poster.
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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 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 and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterates this approach.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The proposal seeks permission for the replacement of an existing externally illuminated 48 sheet poster advertisement, occupying an elevated position on the gable end of No 661 Stockport Road, with a digital advertisement. The appeal site is adjacent to several shops and services occupying the ground floor units of the host terrace along Stockport Road, thus this part of the street scene is predominantly commercial. However, the immediate locality also has a

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

- strong residential character as there are terraced dwellings adjacent to the appeal site along East Road and in surrounding streets.
6. 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. Although the rate of change would be no more than once every ten seconds, the images would nevertheless be significantly sharper than those currently displayed. All these factors would cause the proposal to be more apparent and overly dominant in the street scene than the existing advertisement.
 7. The proposal would be read within the context of both the adjacent residential area and the commercial frontages along Stockport Road. Whilst there a number of advertisements along this stretch of Stockport Road, they are of a much-reduced scale than the existing advertisement. Large digital advertisements occupying raised positions are not characteristic of the immediate locality. Therefore, due to its elevated position, scale and method of display, the proposed advertisement would be highly prominent in the locality. It would be a visually incongruous and overly dominant addition to the street scene and would erode the character of the area.
 8. The appellant has suggested that background light levels in the locality are of a moderate level at night due to the surrounding context and high number of street lights. Whilst lighting along this stretch of Stockport Road may be slightly higher due to the commercial parade, the site is also immediately adjacent a residential area and opposite a public park. I am not therefore convinced that background light levels in the locality justify the appeal proposal. I acknowledge that the illumination levels of the proposed advertisement could be reduced at night by way of condition, and also at all times via light sensors. However, due to the method of display and multi-changing nature, it would nevertheless remain apparent and dominant in the street scene at night time.
 9. It is acknowledged that this proposal would see the upgrade of the existing advertisement, which the appellant suggests is poorly maintained. This was not evident at the time of my site visit however, be that as it may, it does not outweigh the harm this proposal would cause to visual amenity and does not therefore justify the proposal.
 10. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the visual amenity of the area. In that respect the proposal is contrary to policies EN1, SP1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework, Core Strategy (July 2012) and saved policies DC15 and E3.3 of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (July 1995) which, although not decisive, collectively seek to ensure proposals do not harm the character of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. 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

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

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR