
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 June 2020

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/20/3248697

438 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 9LE

- 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 Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 125515/AOH/2019, dated 21 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is the upgrade of 1no. 48-sheet advertisement hoarding to digital LED display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The postcode of the appeal site differs on the application form and the decision notice. I have used the postcode given on the decision notice and on the appeal form in the banner header above, as this appears to be the correct one.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site occupies a prominent location on the side elevation of the building, on what is a main arterial route into and out of Manchester city centre. The surrounding area is mixed in use, with residential properties close to the appeal site, but the context in which the proposed advertisement would be viewed is predominantly commercial. There is a proliferation of existing signage in the area, including several large advertisement hoardings similar in scale to that subject to the appeal and these are sited both at ground level and on the side elevations of nearby buildings.
5. The existing display at the appeal site is large in size but its presence is generally consistent with the character and commercial nature of the surrounding area. It comprises of a fixed poster display that is not illuminated, which means that it currently has a passive impact upon the amenity of the surrounding area, when viewed amongst the many other displays that are present. In this context, the existing hoarding does not draw any significant attention to itself as an individual feature within a street scene that is already highly populated by advertisements.

6. By contrast, the proposal would be illuminated and this would serve to draw attention to the display in a way that does not currently occur, in particular at times when light levels were poor and during hours of darkness. This would mean that the proposed advertisement would become a visually dominant feature on this side of Cheetham Hill Road. As a result, and due to the fact that the appeal site is prominent and it occupies a position on a major road heading into the city centre, the proposal would be an intrusive and overly-dominant feature, and it would cause significant harm to the amenity of the surrounding area.
7. The appellant makes reference to the fact that illumination levels could be controlled to minimise the impact, but nonetheless the fact that the display would be illuminated per se would cause harm for the reasons I have outlined. Furthermore, it is unclear from the appeal submission as to how frequently the image on the display would change, but any frequent change would serve to draw further attention to the proposal and to add to the harm that would arise upon the amenity of the area.
8. The appellant has highlighted that there are other advertisement hoardings close to the appeal site. These include three illuminated hoardings on the opposite side of Cheetham Hill Road to the appeal site. The Council states that many of these are unauthorised, but I have not been provided with specific details in this regard. Cumulatively however, the other hoardings already create a cluttered appearance within the street scene, including in views taken towards the appeal site. Their presence does not justify the addition of a further dominant feature, and one which would cause the degree of harm that I have identified.
9. The appellant has stated that since the application was submitted they have gained access to a new generation of digital screens that would be less deep than that shown on the appeal plans. However, this is not an area of concern that was raised specifically by the Council. Whilst there would be likely to be some efficiency improvements resulting from the fact that the display could be changed remotely, this consideration does not outweigh the significant harm to amenity that I have found. Any improvements to the advert casing as a result of the proposal would have only a very limited benefit and this too would not outweigh the harm that would arise.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to amenity due to its positioning and its illumination. I have taken into account Policies EN1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2012 and Saved Policies DC15 and E3.3 of The Manchester Plan Unitary Development Plan 1995 which collectively seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case, together with paragraph 132 of The National Planning Policy Framework. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Conclusion

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

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR