
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2020 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 03 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/20/3249104

Railway Embankment Queens Road, adj 209 Queens Road, Manchester M8 0QY

- 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 Matt Swindles, Global against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 125541/AOH/2019, dated 22 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is replacement of 1no. 96-sheet advertising hoarding with 1no. 48-sheet LED advertising 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.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The Council has drawn my attention to Development Plan policies it considers 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.
5. Queens Road is one of the main routes to Manchester city centre and, in the vicinity of the appeal site has a predominantly residential character, notwithstanding the garage and shops to the rear of it. The current advertisement is situated on the railway embankment for Metrolink, which has an open and vegetated character. On the opposite side of the road is the

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

access to the Metrolink station and an open landscaped area. Accordingly, despite the busy character of the highway, the area has an open appearance.

6. The existing hoarding is not illuminated, but due to its size and position on the railway embankment is visually prominent in the street scene. The proposal would replace the hoarding with a digital poster half the size. It is recognised that the reduction in size of the hoarding would reduce the size of the advertisements. This would be a benefit of the scheme. However, as a result of its illumination, images on the hoarding would be brighter and sharper than those on the existing structure. The intermittent changing of the illuminated display would significantly attract attention, further accentuating its visual prominence and harmful effect on the amenity of the area, irrespective of its location outside of a Conservation Area or close to heritage assets. Accordingly, any benefit gained from the reduction in the size of the hoarding would be negated by the change in the appearance of the advertisement. Moreover, as a result of the change, the display would be even more dominant in the street scene than the existing.
7. I note the appellant's contention that the brightness of the advertisement would be within best practice guidance. However, as set out above, the board's digital illumination would be visually prominent and would stand out and dominate the street scene.
8. My attention has been drawn to an existing hoarding in the vicinity of the appeal site, which is of a similar size to the appeal proposal. The siting of this hoarding is such that it is not as prominent in the street scene and its characteristics are different given that it is not an LED illuminated advertising panel. In any event, this appeal has been considered on its own merits.
9. For the reasons set out, the proposal, would result in unacceptable harm to visual amenity. In that respect the proposal is contrary to saved Policy DC15 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and Policies DM1 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, which although not decisive, seek in various ways to ensure that development does not harm the character of the area.

Other Matter

10. From the site visit I noted the construction of new residential development on Eckford Street to the rear of the appeal site and other more established residential properties nearby. However, from all I saw at the site visit, the proposed siting of the advertisement hoarding is not visible from the residential properties and would therefore not affect the amenity of the occupiers. This does not reduce the harm I have found to the visual amenity of the area from the replacement advertisement display.
11. The appellant argues benefits to the proposal in environmental terms, such as the reduction in printed posters and physical travel to advertisement sites. However, whilst I acknowledge these benefits, they do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. 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