



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2020

by Jillian Rann BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/Z/20/3258333

Gable of 65 Doncaster Road, Wakefield WF1 5DX

- 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 City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00375/ADV, dated 14 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as: 'upgrade of existing 48 sheet poster display to support digital 48 sheet poster'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted revised drawings with the appeal indicating a slightly amended location for the advertisement. However, the Planning Inspectorate's Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England advises that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and that it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority, and on which interested people's views were sought. I have therefore based my decision on the drawings considered by the Council, as listed on its decision, as to do otherwise could prejudice the interests of those who may have wished to comment on the revised proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area, including the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. The advertisement would be located at second floor level on the side gable of a three storey terraced building which has commercial properties on its ground floor and residential uses on parts of its upper floors. It is one of a number of terraced buildings which form a small commercial parade on Doncaster Road.
5. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that large poster hoardings may be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city where they would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site¹.

¹ Paragraph Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306.

6. The site is on Doncaster Road, a busy main road close to Wakefield city centre. As well as the commercial units in the appeal terrace and those beyond, there are larger commercial and industrial buildings on Doncaster Road nearby. However, there are also residential properties and a cemetery on the opposite side of Doncaster Road in the immediate vicinity. Despite the presence of nearby commercial buildings, the site's surroundings are therefore mixed rather than being predominantly commercial or industrial in character.
7. In general, existing signage on the appeal terrace is relatively limited in size and extends no higher than the first floor windowsills, with only one small projecting sign slightly above that height. In contrast, the proposed advertisement would have a substantial width, height and area, extending to cover almost the full depth of the building's side elevation. It may not obscure any features on the building. However, as a result of its substantial size, its elevated position and its fully illuminated design, it would constitute a disproportionately large and unduly dominant feature on the appeal building and in the context of existing signage on that building, and would be highly visible from some distance away along Doncaster Road.
8. Existing signs on the terraces beyond the site are also generally limited in height and scale relative to their building frontages. Other commercial and industrial buildings on Doncaster Road nearby are large structures with signage generally proportionate to their scale. The neighbouring petrol station has signage on its canopy and a freestanding totem sign on its forecourt which includes some illumination.
9. However, the proposed advertisement would be positioned even higher than those nearby signs and fully illuminated except for its frame. It would therefore also be unduly prominent and incongruous in the wider street scene, even in the context of existing signage nearby and other smaller or intermittent light sources such as street lighting or vehicle lights. Therefore, and having regard to the partly residential context of its immediate surroundings, the advertisement would be discordant and detract from the amenity of the area.
10. The site is adjacent to the Waterfront Conservation Area (the WCA), which includes parts of the River Calder and the Calder and Hebble Navigation on the outskirts of the city centre, and a number of waterside buildings. The area of the WCA in the vicinity of the site is comprised principally of those waterways themselves and associated infrastructure, including the grade II listed locks, basin and docks at Fall Ings Lock very close to the site.
11. As well-preserved examples of canal infrastructure associated with the area's industrial past, those listed structures have historic and architectural interest which contributes to their significance. Their setting includes those parts of the canalside within their immediate surroundings. Those canalside surroundings extend to the edge of Fall Ings Road just behind the appeal site and are visible from Doncaster Road through part of the WCA which extends along Fall Ings Road adjacent to the side gable of the appeal building.
12. The advertisement would be located within wider commercial surroundings just beyond the canalside and the boundary of the WCA. However, it would nonetheless feature very prominently in the foreground of views into the WCA, towards the listed locks, basin and docks and the adjacent canalside, along Fall Ings Road from its junction with Doncaster Road. Due to its size, height and illuminated design the advertisement would be significantly more prominent

than other existing signage around that junction. It would therefore represent a highly discordant and intrusive feature that would draw the eye, distract from those views of the historic waterway infrastructure and detract from the appreciation of those features and their canalside surroundings within the WCA. Therefore, the proposal would not preserve the setting of the listed locks, basin and docks at Fall Ings Lock on the Calder and Hebble Navigation or the character, appearance or setting of the adjacent WCA.

13. Limits on the level of illumination, including at night, and on matters such as the use of moving images would not address the harm I have identified since the substantial size and fully illuminated appearance of the advertisement would still be evident.
14. I recognise that advertisements are intended to attract attention, and have been referred to the greater flexibility and sustainability of digital advertising compared to poster advertising. However, any benefits arising in those respects would not outweigh the harm to amenity and to those nearby heritage assets that I have identified.
15. The proposed advertisement would have an adverse effect on the amenity of the area, including the setting of nearby designated heritage assets. It would not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited or designed, or with the guidance in the PPG as set out above. It would also conflict with Policies D9, D16, D18 and D19 of the Development Policies Development Plan Document insofar as they require proposals, including advertisements, to respect the character of the locality and avoid adverse impact on historic locations. I have had regard to those policies as further material considerations.

Other Matters

16. The Council also refers to what it describes as a locally listed yard and range to the rear of 65-75 Doncaster Road. However, I have not been provided with details of the exact location or the specific nature or value of those features. Therefore, and as I have found substantive harm to designated heritage assets in any event, I have not considered the matter further in this instance.
17. I note references made to the site's history of use for advertising, although no advertisement display was in place at the time of my visit. In any event, I have considered the appeal on its own planning merits and such references do not alter my conclusions regarding the harm I have identified.
18. My attention has been drawn to a consent granted for another display elsewhere on Doncaster Road. However, from the limited information before me I cannot be certain of the specific circumstances in that case or that they were directly comparable to those in the current appeal. Notwithstanding comparisons drawn, I have determined this appeal on the basis of the specific circumstances and planning merits of this site and proposal. The presence of other displays elsewhere does not dissuade me from my findings regarding the harm to amenity that would arise in this case.
19. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Jillian Rann
INSPECTOR