



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/Z/20/3256484

West Quay Road Corner Harbour Parade, Southampton SO15 1ST

- 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 Ocean Outdoor UK Ltd against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00479/ADV, dated 7 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'installation of portrait digital display 6m high x 4m wide'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on public safety.

Reasons

3. Planning Practice Guidance sets out that advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, pedestrian crossings and where local conditions present traffic hazards.
4. The appellant's submitted road safety audit¹ raised no concerns with the proposal. However, this considered a different advert to that before me. As such, this reduces the weight I attach to those findings. Furthermore, whilst I note that this considers the history of accidents at this junction, it is nonetheless a significant concern that several accidents have been recorded. In these circumstances I place significant weight on the expert views of the Council's highway officer. They have considered the same plans as before me and object to the proposals.
5. The proposal would be located at the junction of West Quay Road (A33) and Harbour Place. The proposed sign would be clearly visible to south-east bound traffic on West Quay Road which, on approaches to the junction, splits to three lanes for traffic turning left and right, as well as that continuing ahead. The junction includes pedestrian crossings on the south-east and north-east arms, but this is only signal controlled on the former. As such, traffic turning left has

¹ Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, March 2019 by GM Traffic Consultants Ltd

to be aware of pedestrians crossing without the benefit of signals to aid them. Therefore, on approaches to the advertisement there are a number of matters for drivers to be aware of and decisions to make.

6. Whilst the road is relatively straight and speeds are likely to be modest, within the central reservation a short distance before the junction there is a small format advertisement. This utilises light emitting diode (LED) technology, operating on a loop, similar to that proposed. This advertising forms part of the driver's context and the National Planning Policy Framework sets out at paragraph 132 that cumulative impacts should be taken into account. Moreover, although a commercial location, the highway is likely to have significant volumes of traffic, including a proportion of drivers visiting Southampton and using the city centre car parks or the cruise terminals and ferries. Some of these will not be familiar with the road network in the vicinity and consequently will need to have greater care.
7. The proposed sign would be of a significant size, substantially greater than the traffic signals, which include phased right turning. The proposal would be sited very close to the traffic signals at the south-east arm of the junction and form part of the backdrop to the lights on the north-east arm. The illuminated LED display facilitates advertisements to be looped sequentially. As such, whilst each advert would be static the illuminated display would change relatively frequently and appear very large in close proximity to, or as a backdrop for, some of the signals. Consequently, even if a different colour to the traffic signals, the proposal would likely hinder the ready interpretation of the lights due to the confusion between the traffic signals and advertisement. Having regard to all the matters raised and my own site observations this would result in harm to public safety.
8. The appellant sets out that a number of similar signs have been approved within Southampton. However, based on the limited evidence these appear to largely relate to replacement of existing traditional hoardings. This is not the case here and whilst I have observed some similar existing signs on the A33, none are identical to the proposal before me. As such, I have afforded these limited weight and proceeded to determine the appeal on its own merits.
9. I have taken into account 'saved' policies SDP 1 and SDP 24 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review, Adopted Version, March 2006 which seek to protect public safety and so are material in this case. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm public safety, the proposal conflicts with these policies.
10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be detrimental to the interests of public safety.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR