



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2021

by J Williamson BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/20/3263122

Shell Princess Parkway, Princess Road, Manchester M14 7LU

- 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 Paul Hardy, Vivid Outdoor Media Ltd, against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 127597/AO/2020, dated 28 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as: Installation of 1 x freestanding portrait digital advertising display unit, measuring 6m high x 4m wide, and comprising pressed metal frame and sealed LED screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the character or appearance of the area, which includes the setting of a neighbouring Grade II Listed Park, namely Alexandra Park.

Reasons

3. The site comprises a petrol station located on the western side of Princess Road, a main radial route connecting Manchester City Centre with south Manchester and the motorway network beyond. The south-eastern corner of the listed park abuts the northern boundary of the site. There is a row of 4 detached office buildings immediately south of the site, and there are residential properties along the eastern side of the road.
4. The appearance of the site is that of a typical petrol station, with forecourt canopy covering fuel pumps, a store set back from the road and several associated signs/advertisements. One of the existing signs consists of a post with petrol company logo fascia sign at the top, which is sited close to the site boundary with the footpath. The total height of the post and sign is around 12 m.
5. The proposed digital display unit would be attached to the post referred to; the size and siting would result in it overlapping the bottom of the existing logo fascia sign and extending out around 0.4 m each side of it. The eastern edge of the unit would extend over the eastern boundary wall/railings of the site, and its western edge would be sited close to the eastern edge of the canopy. The bottom edge of the display unit would be positioned around the same height as

an existing fuel price totem sign I observed on site, which was positioned close to a large 'coffee cup' advertisement structure and a 'way-in' sign.

6. Hence, the view passers-by currently have is of a slimline post with a proportionate logo fascia sign atop of it and space either side of the post so that it doesn't appear cramped against the forecourt canopy or the boundary wall/railings. Additionally, there is a significant gap between the top of the existing fuel price totem sign and the underside of the petrol company logo fascia sign.
7. In contrast, the size of the proposed unit would enclose the existing space around the post. Being wider than and overlapping the existing fascia sign, the proposed unit would jar with the existing fascia sign. Passers-by travelling north would perceive 3 signs each of different heights and widths, with one significantly overhanging the site's boundary on one side and appearing cramped up against the forecourt canopy on the other side. The content of the proposed unit would not relate to either the petrol company logo fascia sign, the fuel price totem sign, or the overall corporate appearance of the site.
8. The view travelling south would be of the same mass of signs described above, and the northern facing side of the proposed display unit would simply be a large block of white profile cladding. I consider the size of the proposed display unit, the poor relationship between it and the existing signage, the varied appearance of the respective signs and the block of cladding on one side of the unit would create a discordant feature in a prominent position. Consequently, I consider the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the street scene.
9. The site is located at a point of transition between a stretch of dual carriageway with buildings of mixed uses and the tree-lined boundary of the listed Alexandra Park. Except for the signage within the appeal site and one advertisement board sited adjacent to a building located close to the north eastern corner of the park near to Nursery Street, the immediate setting of the park, which I consider to consist of the surrounding highway network and frontage buildings, is primarily free of advertisement signage. I consider the size of the proposed unit, the overall mass created with existing signage and the poor relationship between the proposed unit, existing signs and the forecourt canopy, would add to the harm to the setting of the listed park which I consider is already caused by the existing signage referred to.
10. I have assessed the proposal in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended (the Regulations). Bearing the above factors in mind, I conclude that the proposed digital display unit would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area. The Regulations allow for development plan policies to be considered only in so far as they are material. I have considered policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) and saved policies E3.3 and DC15 of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995). Regarding design and character and appearance of the area, I consider saved policies E3.3 and DM1 to be consistent with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Collectively, and among other things, these policies require proposals to have regard to the character and appearance of the area, make a positive contribution to the locality and improve the appearance of the City's major radial roads. Given I

have concluded that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, the proposal therefore conflicts with these policies.

Other considerations

11. The appellant has drawn my attention to several other advertisement signs approved by the Council, the existence of which, it is suggested, support the proposed display unit. However, each proposal must be appraised on its own merits within the circumstances of the site. That said, I note that the surrounding commercial and industrial premises around the Princess Road/Greenheys West junction, and the size and scale of the junction itself, provides a very different context to the appeal site location. On that basis alone no meaningful comparison can be made.
12. The photo submitted of a totem sign located at a Shell petrol station on the A6 suggests that there are some similarities in site circumstances, eg. a radial road with a mix of commercial and residential land uses along it. However, even though I do not know the full details of the case, the overall design of the totem and its proximity to and relationship with the adjacent footpath and forecourt canopy differ to the proposal. As such, again, I consider the 2 schemes are not directly comparable.
13. As regards the digital display sign located within the grounds of the Parkway Business Centre, again I consider there to be significant differences between that sign and the site circumstances and the proposal. First, the business buildings are set much further back from the road than the petrol station forecourt and there is much more space around the sign than there would be at the appeal site. Second, the sign is sited away from the boundary and not overhanging the footpath. Third, the design of the sign is of one complete unit with a consistent width, not a collection of several signs of different sizes. And fourth, the sign is outside the immediate setting of the listed park. Consequently, again I do not consider the signs to be directly comparable.
14. I note that the site operates 24 hours per day and that existing lighting is on during twilight and the hours of darkness. However, this does not overcome the harm identified and does not justify allowing the appeal.
15. The appellant draws upon various policies within the Framework in support of the proposal, mainly the concept of sustainable development and the contribution outdoor advertising makes to economic development. However, these factors are not relevant to either visual amenity or public safety and therefore cannot be used to justify the proposed display unit.
16. I therefore conclude that the matters referred to do not alter my conclusion regarding the harm the proposed digital display unit would cause to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Williamson

INSPECTOR