



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 7 September 2021

by K A Taylor MSC URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/Z/21/3274566

City Gate, 8 St Mary's Gate, Sheffield S1 4LW

- 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 Elonex Signs against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00893/HOARD, dated 25 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is illuminated digital advertising screen for the display of static poster advertisements.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20 July 2021. I have had regard to the Framework in my decision and I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party.
3. The Regulations¹ require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterate this approach. I have taken account of the policies the Council considers to be relevant to this appeal insofar as they relate to amenity and public safety.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

5. The appeal site relates to an existing modern 14-storey office building known as 'City Gate' of which includes the Premier Inn Hotel. It is located within a defined 'Business Area' of the city and within a prominent position overlooking the inner ring road, a gateway entrance to the city centre of Sheffield. The proposed advertisement would be a digital screen measuring some 7.5 metres in height and 5 metres wide within a highly elevated position on the south-east façade of the building.
6. The advertisement would be internally illuminated by LED lighting and of a portrait design. The appellant advises that the advertising space would be let or rented out for businesses, tourism and public information with the digital static images sent electronically to the screen. The frequency of the advertisement on

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

display would be for less than a 10 second period but could be let to a single advertiser for a 2-week period. Luminance levels would be in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers Technical report specifications, not exceeding 300 candela per square metre.

7. Despite the proposed advertisement being of a portrait style and located in a central position with a vertical emphasis, and this part of the building and cladding devoid of any signage. The hoarding would be of a substantial size and positioned at high level on a tall building that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the city's vista, skylines and townscape. Therefore, it would be seen from both long- and short-range views along the inner relief road, which forms the 'gateway' and major routes into and out of the City, resulting in an incongruous advertisement, detracting from the visual appearance of the tall building and being visually obtrusive to the prominent route location within the area.
8. Furthermore, the proposed advertisement would appear awkwardly on the architectural composition and setting of the building, particularly due to it being centrally positioned on the cladding, its design, and that existing signage, albeit on the adjoining elevation is smaller and not digital. I do not consider that to add some colour and interest to a plain uniform façade, justifies the proposal. I also observed at the time of the site visit, there were no other high level digital signage or large hoardings within the immediate vicinity of the site, advertisements were relatively small and in context to the use, height and appearance of buildings.
9. Therefore, the proposed advertisement would sit in an uncomfortable position resulting in it being uncoordinated with existing signage, it would not respect the dignity of the host building. As such, the cumulative impact of existing and the proposed advertisement would result in an excessive display of signage on a prominent tall building. Thus, causing harm to the visual amenities of both the building, immediate and wider area. Moreover, this would be exacerbated due to the illumination and changing nature of the digital images.
10. Consequently, I conclude that due to its siting and design, the proposed advertisement would have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the area. It would be contrary to Policy BE13 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan, 1998 which permits illuminated advertisements where they do not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would also be in conflict with Policy CS75 of the Sheffield Development Framework, Core Strategy, 2009, which requires improvements to Gateway Routes into and through the city. I have also had regard to Policy CS74, design principles in so far it relates to high quality design, views, vistas to landmarks and skylines into and out of the city centre.
11. Moreover, the proposed advertisement would also be in conflict with paragraph 136 of the Framework, with regards to achieving well-designed places and that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Other Matters

12. The Council acknowledge that the proposal would not have an adverse impact with respect to highway safety or public safety. However, this is a neutral consideration weighting neither for nor against the proposed advertisement.

13. The appellant refers to the effects of the pandemic and benefits that the advertisement would have to provide a platform for a whole range of businesses as well as the wider community. I acknowledge the digital display would generate economic activity for users of the screen for advertising products / services. However, these benefits would be limited in scale and do not outweigh the harm to amenity.

Conclusion

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

KA Taylor

INSPECTOR