The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2021 by Max Webb BA (Hons)

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R3515/Z/21/3285669
189 Bramford Road, Ipswich IP1 4AA

- 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 Alight Media against the decision of Ipswich Borough Council.
- The application Ref IP/21/00915/ADV, dated 17 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2021.
- The advertisement proposed is a single illuminated 48-sheet digital advertisement display.

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 proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out that powers under those Regulations shall be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

5. The Planning Practice Guidance sets out that in practice, 'amenity' is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement, and the local characteristics of the neighbourhood should always be considered. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

6. The appeal site is located in an area made up of residential properties interspersed with commercial units. Most properties are traditional red brick or light rendered terraces, and this gives the area a predominantly residential character. The appeal site itself is a commercial unit, with a number of small-scale advertisements. Other commercial buildings in the vicinity have some small signage, mostly related to the use of the building, and there are no large-scale advertisements in the vicinity of the appeal site.

7. The proposal seeks to install a digital advertisement display in close proximity to the end of a row of terrace properties. This property is a traditional red brick terrace, and although there are a variety of built details and colours in the surrounding area, these properties are clearly residential in character. The modern, commercial appearance of the proposal would contradict the residential and smaller scale commercial appearance of the terrace row and surrounding area and would thus look out of place.

8. The display would be large and positioned relatively high in comparison to most other advertisements in the area and would therefore look intrusive and uncomfortable in its setting. The existing advertisements on the appeal site, although brightly coloured, are mostly unilluminated and small scale, including fascia signs and banners. The appeal proposal, however, would be illuminated and much larger than the other signage. Therefore, despite the busy junction setting, the large advertisement display would appear incongruous.

9. The dot matrix sign on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site is smaller than the proposed display and appears to be used to provide road users with information. Therefore, this dot matrix sign is not as conspicuous as the proposal would be. Even though advertisement displays are a relatively common sight in urban areas and at major road junctions, as outlined above, this location would be inappropriate for the scale of the proposed advertisement.

10. Although not determinative, consideration should still be given to the Development Plan. Regard has been given to Policies CS2 and DM5 of the Core Strategy[1] which together seek to ensure development enhances the public realm and protects the visual appearance of the immediate street scene. The SPD[2] has also been considered, and this aims to protect the domestic scale of the area. As the proposed advertisement would harm the visual amenity of the area, it would conflict with these Policies and guidance.

Other Matters

11. The potential economic and sustainability benefits of the proposal have been considered, however as this relates to a single site, the benefits would be limited and would not outweigh the harm found to visual amenity.

12. Although there were no objections from local residents and it is not considered residential amenity would be significantly negatively impacted by the proposal, this would not reduce the visual harm of the advertisement.

13. The appellant suggests a number of conditions, including the option to switch the proposed display off between 11:00pm and 6:00am. However, these limitations would not reduce the harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding area that would be caused by the proposal to an acceptable level.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

[1] Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (adopted 2017)
[2] Norwich Road Character Area Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2015)

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR