
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2021

by M Clowes BA (hons) MCD PGCERT (Arch Con) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/21/3282962

Land at Pin Mill Brow, Manchester M12 6AE

- 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 R Page (Wildstone) against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 130832/AO/2021, dated 11 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'erection of a 48-sheet (6m x 3m) digital advertising display.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations), paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance all confirm that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Both main parties agree that the proposal would not harm public safety. Accordingly, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of a small, triangular parcel of land adjacent to the junction of the A635 Mancunian Way and Pin Mill Brow. The site is grassed with additional shrub and tree planting. The surrounding area consists of a number of industrial and commercial premises and the fast-moving high-volume highways, which form part of the area's character.
4. The proposal is for an internally illuminated 48 sheet advertisement with a sequential display. It would be sited next to the current digital display granted on appeal in 2019. The advertisement would be of the same size and scale as the existing, measuring 6m wide x 3m in height erected on 3m posts.
5. The proposed advertisement would be sited parallel with and closer to the A635 than the existing display, in order to be visible to highway users of Pin Mill Brow. It would be seen next to the existing advertisement from 2 different viewpoints from these roads. Given the overall height and proximity of the display to the A635, it would have a greater degree of prominence than the existing advertisement within the street scene, particularly on turning the corner onto the A635. Despite its minimalistic design and seamless transition

- between advertisements, this prominence would be further exacerbated by the proposed degree of illumination, particularly during periods of poor daylight.
6. In the immediate vicinity, there are existing commercial advertisements at the YESS Electrical store and letter signage on the façades of the Ark Trimmings Haberdashery and Curry's Clearance store. In addition, there are numerous totem signs on the A635 and Pin Mill Brow, along with digital and static displays at the nearby intersections of the A635 and Fairfield Street. I agree with the Council that the proposed advertisement when combined with the existing commercial displays on neighbouring premises and within the highway, existing street furniture, and road signage, would result in visual cluttering of the area. Whilst some existing advertisements would not be seen in direct views with the proposed display, it would nonetheless result in a proliferation of such features that would be cumulatively harmful to the area. The impact of the advertisement would not be mitigated by its surroundings in this instance.
 7. Whilst the site is located in a commercial part of a city centre, next to interconnecting highways, this is nevertheless a green corner that contributes positively to the appearance of the area. The position and scale of the display would obscure public views of the verdant corner from Pin Mill Brow, thereby reducing the influence that the pocket of landscaping currently has on the appearance of the street scene. I concur with the Council's Neighbourhood Officer that the proposal would be likely to result in the removal of some existing shrubs and trees. Whilst I accept that they are of low quality, they nevertheless make a positive contribution to tree coverage in this location.
 8. I note the 2019 appeal decision. However, this was in relation to the replacement of an existing advertisement, rather than a wholly new additional display as is the case here. The existing advertisements surrounding the site do not set a precedent as the proposal has to be dealt with on its own merits. By virtue of the overall size, position and format of the additional advertisement, it would result in a dominant display and visual clutter on a gateway route into and around Manchester City Centre. It would further diminish the contribution of the landscaped corner to the appearance of the streetscene. Planning conditions restricting illumination would not overcome the harm identified to amenity.
 9. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) which seek amongst other things, to promote good design that reflects the character of the locality through appropriate siting, form and detail to protect and enhance the built environment. Saved policies DC15.1 and DC 15.2 and E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan (1995) are also of particular relevance, as they seek to ensure new development is of the highest quality adjacent to the city's major roads and that advertisements are appropriate to their location and their impact on visual amenity. Furthermore, the Framework, seeks to control advertisements in the interests of amenity. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Other Matters

10. HS2 Ltd have advised that the site would be affected by the Manchester Piccadilly High Speed Station works associated with HS2. As I am dismissing the appeal, I have not dealt with this issue further.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the display of the advertisement would be harmful to visual amenity and the appeal should be dismissed.

M Clowes

INSPECTOR