



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2022

by Katherine Robbie BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/Z/21/3283189

Buzz Bingo, Marine Road East, Morecambe LA4 5HY

- 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 Rob Smith (Alight Media Ltd) against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00575/ADV, dated 6 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of 2 x 48 sheet free standing digital advertising display units, measuring 6.4m wide x 3.4m high, comprising pressed metal frames and sealed LED screens mounted in a double sided format on a central supporting monopole.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the advertisements on the visual amenity of the area with specific regard to the Morecambe Conservation Area (CA) and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is situated on the eastern boundary of a car park to the front of Buzz Bingo on Marine Road East which forms part of a sea front road along Morecambe Bay. The proposal would be positioned at right angles to Marine Road East. The bingo hall occupies a large plot of land with the building itself set back from a line of terraced dwellings on the opposite side of Lord Street on Marine Road Central. The proposal would be located adjacent to the landscaped gardens in front of the Town Hall.
4. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Section 66 of the same Act requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') states that when considering the impact of a proposal the significance of the designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the significant can be harmed or lost through development within their setting.
5. The terrace that includes Nos 333 to 343 Marine Road Central are grade II listed, as is the Town Hall. The significance of the setting of the buildings is

formed by the CA, which is a traditional sea front town, presenting itself outwards to the bay. The terraced buildings have a strong form and homogeneity in their architectural style. The Town Hall, benefitting from pleasant, landscaped garden frontage contributes positively to its immediate context. Other buildings are in a mix of uses, with sea front properties having been converted to flats, guest houses or hotels. Where signage is used, it tends to be on façades, restrained, modest and thus recessive in views.

6. The proposal, due to its scale, design, positioning and horizontal emphasis, would appear intrusive and incongruous in the above context, especially when viewed from the promenade to the west in the context of the listed terraced houses and would be unduly prominent in setting of the Town Hall and the landscaped gardens it sits behind and also amongst the surrounding street furniture, flagpoles and road signs.
7. I have not been provided with any evidence that the level of illumination of the advertisements would reflect other advertisements in the locality. From my observations on site, other than fascia signage on the bingo hall and small illuminated box signs on hotels and guest houses close by there are no other similar types of advertisement in the vicinity of the proposal which would be like that which is proposed. This would compound its incongruity and introduce a form of signage which would be alien to its surroundings.
8. The proposal would therefore be unacceptable in visual amenity terms, accordingly, harming the character and appearance of the CA and the significance of the setting of nearby listed buildings. Insofar as they are a material consideration, the proposals would be contrary to Policies DM21, DM29, DM38 and DM39 of the Council's Development Management DPD (2020) which together seek to ensure that all development is of high quality and appropriate to its location. It would also be contrary to chapters 12 and 16 of the Framework which seek to ensure that development is well designed and appropriate to the historic environment to within which it is proposed.

Other Matters

9. I have had regard to the fact that the proposal could be used to advertise local businesses and therefore have some economic benefits. This is, however, a scheme considered under the advertisement regulations and in any event, I cannot be certain that this is what the advertisement would be used for. This matter therefore carries limited weight.
10. My attention has been drawn to the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) which states that large poster hoardings should be permitted in commercial areas. However, factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest also need to be taken into account in coming to a view that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the amenity of a locality. The PPG explains that if the advertisement is to be displayed in a location which has any of these features, consideration should be given to whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.
11. I do not have precise details of examples cited by the appellant or indeed what consent they do or do not benefit from. The existence of other similar displays in other seafront or urban locations does not, in any event, equate to the acceptability of an advertisement hoarding in the location before me. Similar

48 sheet digital hoardings can be present on arterial routes into towns and cities elsewhere in the country. This, however, does not persuade me that the proposal is appropriate for this location. I have also considered the appellants argument the height of the proposed advert is typical of this type of digital display unit. None of these factors outweigh the harm to the visual amenity of the area that I have found in this case.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the display of the advertisements would be detrimental to the interests of amenity. Thus, the appeal should be dismissed.

Katherine Robbie

INSPECTOR