



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 April 2022

by Julie Dale Clark BA Hons) DipTP MCD DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/Z/22/3292121

19 – 23 Exchange Road, Watford WD18 0JD

- 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 Space Outdoor against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01460/ADV, dated 17 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is upgrade of existing 48-sheet advertisement hoarding to support digital poster.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the advertisement as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises an area of land on the eastern side of Exchange Road. The road is part of a busy one way system and the existing advertisement hoarding is very visible to passing vehicular traffic and pedestrians. The existing sign is of the same size and position to that subject to this appeal but it is proposed to upgrade it to a digital poster.
4. The Regulations require that decisions should be made in the interests of amenity and public safety. Despite the heavy flow of vehicular traffic no concerns have been raised about highway safety. I also have no concerns in this regard. With regard to amenity, saved Policy U25¹ reflects the Regulations and indicated that advertisements will be considered on the basis of their effect on the character and appearance of the building or the locality of the display and the size, location, design and illumination or colour of the advertisement. I have also taken into account Core Strategy Policy UD 1² which sets out design

¹ Watford District Plan 2000 (Adopted December 2003) – Written Statement.

² Watford Borough Council Watford's Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy 2006 – 31, Adopted 30 January 2013.

principles for delivering high quality design that respects and enhances local character.

5. As in the case of the existing sign, the proposed sign would be seen against the backdrop of 19 – 23 Exchange Road, a large grey building. The site is within Watford Town Centre³ and as well as commercial properties there are residential ones. The Council point out that existing and proposed apartments are close to the appeal site and therefore describe the area as being one that is becoming increasingly more residential in its character.
6. However, the area is clearly a mixed area in the Town Centre and even with any as yet undeveloped residential properties, the busy location, adjacent to a main road and with the somewhat uninspiring backdrop of the large grey building, does not comprise a setting where the proposed sign would appear out of place. Furthermore although a new digital sign may appear brighter than the existing sign, I do not consider that the level of illumination to be a matter of concern given the site's setting.
7. In addition to the policies referred to above, the reason for refusal also quotes the Shopfront Design Guide 2013 but this is not included in the appeal documents and given its title I doubt it is relevant to this proposal and so have not taken it into account. I have however, found that the proposal would not conflict with Policy U25 which is consistent with requirements for considering advertisements under the Regulations in terms of amenity.
8. Whilst the appellant has set out suggested conditions in the event of this appeal being allowed, the Council has not suggested any additional conditions other than those set out in the Regulations. On this basis I do not see any reason to impose additional conditions.
9. I have considered all other matters raised but none alter my conclusion. I conclude that the proposed advertisement would not have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. The appeal therefore succeeds.

J D Clark

INSPECTOR

³ As described by the Appellant and the Council.