



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2022

by C Rafferty LLB (Hons), Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/Z/21/3282790

8 City Gate, 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 21/02710/HOARD dated 11 June 2021 was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is an internally illuminated digital advertising screen sign for the display of static advertisements
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Regulations, National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of public safety and amenity. I have taken into account Policy BE13 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan, March 1998 (the UDP) and Policy CS75 of the Sheffield Development Framework Core Strategy, March 2009 (the Core Strategy). These policies seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case but are not determinative in reaching a decision on the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a strip of land located in front of a modern multi-storey building known as City Gate, encompassing offices and a hotel. While the surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses, due to the presence of the busy highway and tall units it has a largely urban and commercial feel. It is also designated as a Central Shopping Area. The City Gate building, with its varied façade on the south east elevation, is a striking feature in the area.
5. The proposal would erect a free-standing internally illuminated digital advertisement screen at the site, in front of the south east elevation of City Gate. The luminance and brightness of the display would be in line with the levels recommended by the Institute of Lighting Engineers. It would display static images on rotation with each advertisement changing instantaneously no more than once every 10 seconds. These matters could be secured by condition.

6. However, due to its dimensions the proposal would be a sizeable addition to the streetscene. Its raised position and the long views afforded by the clear, straight nature of the road in front would result in it dominating the immediate locality. Even acknowledging the controls suggested by the appellant, the proposed illumination would further emphasise its presence, with the sizeable freestanding base also bringing the feeling of dominance to street level on the footpath below.
7. Furthermore, while the portrait orientation and positioning to align with other elements of the facade seek to respect the composition of the City Gate building, overall the proposal would fail to visually integrate. While not affixed to the building, it would nonetheless add another feature in close proximity and, despite the lack of other such displays on the frontage, against the backdrop of the already varied façade would create a sense of visual clutter. As a result, this part of the street would read as busy and discordant, with the proposal appearing squeezed onto the site. Rather than adding interest and colour at this location it would instead visually compete with the building, to the detriment of the surrounds.
8. In addition, while the area is primarily commercial, the proposal would nonetheless be the first of its kind in the immediate locality. It would be primarily experienced alongside the more modest, affixed signage on this elevation of City Gate which, along with the lack of other free standing illuminated display advertisements, would serve to highlight its prominence and incongruous nature in this location.
9. For the reasons given above I therefore find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm visual amenity, it conflicts with Policy BE13 of the UDP, Policy CS75 of the Core Strategy and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to promote good design.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has referred to certain benefits of the proposal, being that it would be a platform to promote a range of businesses, brands, products and even the city itself. This, in turn, could help to generate business and assist in economic growth and investment, particularly following the pandemic. These benefits are acknowledged, However, given the single sign nature of the proposal, would be limited. As such, this is not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusions

11. Having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

INSPECTOR