



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2022

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 30th June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Z/22/3297271
84 Staines Road, Hounslow TW3 3LF

- 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 Poster Property Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow
 - The application Ref 01054/84/AD2 dated 1 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is the removal of 48 sheet advert and associated gantry and replacement with 48 sheet digital advert (D poster).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the local area.

Reasons

3. The proposal is an internally illuminated digital display on the upper gable wall of the appeal property, which is an end terrace building that faces Staines Road within Hounslow Town Centre. The area to which the site belongs is mixed in character with retail, food and drink and commercial units as well as a gymnasium. There are also some residential properties close to the site including flats on the opposite side of the adjacent car park. From what I saw, advertisements along Staines Road were numerous and varied although most were at street level and often closely associated with ground floor premises.
4. An existing non-illuminated poster panel occupies a large portion of the gable wall of No 84 and it appears to have been in place for some time and benefits from deemed consent. The presence of advertising at this location is, therefore, well-established. If this appeal were to be dismissed, the appellant states that the existing poster panel would be retained. This represents a realistic fall-back position against which the proposal should be assessed.
5. The existing advertisement would be removed to make way for the new addition, as would the existing gantry and its support structure. Compared to its existing counterpart, the position, size and orientation of the proposed display would be the same. Nevertheless, the proposed illumination and frequent rotation of static images on the new display would significantly

increase the visual prominence of the advertisement especially during the hours of darkness.

6. Although the local area contains a wide variety of commercial advertisements and it is well lit, I observed very few examples of display units that would be similar in scale and type to the proposal nor have any examples been drawn to my attention. Notwithstanding its urban context, I consider that the appeal scheme, due to its scale, illumination and frequently changing display, would introduce an overly dominant and incongruous feature into a highly prominent location to the detriment of area's amenity.
7. That impression would be evident particularly from two vantage points. Firstly, when seen from Staines Road on the immediate approach to the site from the northeast, the new advertisement would be a substantial feature in the street scene due to its size and elevated position. Its illumination and changing display would cause the new display to be obtrusive, projecting well above the general commercial aspects of the premises and lighting columns nearby. These findings differ to those of the Council.
8. Secondly, the proposal would also be visible from some windows of the flats on the opposite side of the car park adjacent to the site. From the upper windows of these flats that face the site, the frequently changing and illuminated display would be highly conspicuous given that views would be almost direct and from a reasonably close range.
9. I accept that some existing advertisements would be illuminated at night, as would the lighting columns along the road and in the car park adjacent to the site. Reference is particularly made to the Council's decisions to grant consent for fascia signs associated with a nearby shop at 72-74 Staines Road and the nearby gymnasium as well as totem pole signs at the entrance to the adjacent car park. However, these features are generally smaller and set a lower level than the proposal. As such, they would have a less harmful impact on visual amenity than would be the case with the appeal scheme.
10. The appellant has indicated that the brightness of the proposal could be reduced during night time hours and that the new display could operate so that it was not illuminated between 0000hrs to 0500hrs. These matters could be covered by conditions. The appellant's light diagrams indicate that the light spill from the appeal scheme in these circumstances would be modest in its extent even with a fully white screen. However, this would not overcome my concerns regarding the visual prominence of the proposal and the changing display that would draw the eye outside of these hours.
11. The site is not within a conservation area nor are any heritage assets affected by the appeal scheme. There would be no increase in the number of display units. I also note the 'before and after' photographs of an advertising display in Warrington, which has a different context to that of the site. I also agree that the removal of the gantry and its support would improve the appearance of the host wall although this is insufficient to outweigh the identified harm. Nevertheless, I conclude on the main issue that the proposal would be detrimental to the interests of amenity.
12. The main parties have referred to various planning policies and to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Regulations to control advertisements require that decisions be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety,

taking account of cumulative impacts. As such, the planning policies cited cannot, therefore, be decisive, but I have taken them into account as a material consideration.

13. My attention has been drawn to the potential environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposal; however, I must limit my consideration of the appeal to matters of amenity and public safety. In any event, those benefits would not outweigh the totality of the harm which I have identified.
14. The Council raises no issue in relation to public safety. From the submitted evidence, I have no reason to disagree with that finding. Nevertheless, for the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR