



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2022 by S. Wilson LLB, MSc, LRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Z/22/3292868

Block H Paragon Site, Boston Manor Road, Brentford TW8 9GB

- 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 University of West London (UWL) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01217/C/AD9, dated 18 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is 'Display of two LED illuminated digital advertising screens.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council has drawn my attention to the policies it considers to be relevant to this appeal and I have taken them into account as a material consideration where relevant. However, powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. In my recommendation on this appeal, the policies cited by the Council have not therefore, by themselves, been decisive.
4. Additional information has been provided by the appellant in support of this appeal, namely CGI Views 22/152/01 to 22/152/06 and Scale and Context Drawings 22/152/07 to 22/152/12. These provide additional visualisations of the proposal and do not amend the scheme before me. Therefore, no party would be prejudiced by my considering this additional information.

Main Issue

5. The Council has raised no objection in respect of public safety, and from the evidence before me there is nothing which would lead me to dispute this conclusion. Accordingly, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on visual amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a three-storey building of modern appearance, with a predominantly glass façade and cladding to the rear and sides. There is a shop at ground floor and offices above. The immediate setting is commercial with several large-scale buildings nearby, and the M4 flyover is a dominant feature adjacent to the site. A short distance away on the other side of the flyover are residential properties including grade II listed properties Prospect House, Nos 69 and 71 Manor Road and Nos 73 and 75 Manor Road. The Grand Union Canal & Boston Manor Conservation Area (BMCA) is also nearby, which contains the Grade I listed Boston Manor House.
7. The proposal seeks consent for the display of two LED illuminated digital advertising screens on top of the appeal building. The supporting structure proposed is a pole with 'tuning fork' supporting beams. A four metre high parapet screen is proposed around the edge of the lower part of the building, with horizontal louvres projecting outwards.
8. The area contains many large buildings, and the appeal site is markedly different from its surroundings due to its much smaller scale. Taken together, the proposed advertisements and supporting structure would effectively double the height of the existing building. Due to their height and size, they would appear disproportionately large in relation to the existing building.
9. The screening would be patterned to reflect the pattern of windows below but would be taller than the existing storey heights. It would project above the taller part of the existing building, detracting from this feature and significantly altering the architectural expression of the building. Furthermore, the overhanging louvres would create an awkward and incongruous projecting feature at odds with the simple clean lines of the existing building. Together, the screening and louvres would appear as contrived and prominent features which would detract from the appearance of the building and the area. Control of materials by condition would not be sufficient to mitigate the resulting harm.
10. The proposed advertisements and structure would be screened from view from some locations. However, the appellant's submissions demonstrate that parts of the displays would still be clearly visible from street level in various locations around the site, particularly close to the building. Therefore, the screening would not be wholly effective and, for the reasons above, would have a considerable visual impact in its own right.
11. Even with the images and illumination controlled by condition, as the appellant suggests, the displays would be a prominent feature in an unexpected location, appearing to be perched above this small-scale building. They would be particularly evident at night, when the illumination would make them more prominent.
12. Consequently, the proposal would dominate the modest scale of the existing building and add clutter to the rooftop. It would not be integral to the building's design, would relate poorly to the architectural features and would detract from the elevations of the building. Therefore, the proposal would harm the visual amenity of the appeal building and consequently the wider area.
13. In this commercial area, large scale advertisements are not uncommon. Notably, there is a prominent example on the side of the Mille building, and

various advertising towers alongside the M4. These advertisements are however integral to, and in proportion with, large-scale buildings or purpose designed tall architectural structures which themselves contribute to the character of the area. Therefore, they integrate into their surroundings and are not directly comparable with the appeal proposal in terms of their relationship with their host structure.

14. Viewed from the elevated M4, only the displays and part of the structure would be visible, and this would be in keeping with other similar advertisements along this stretch of the road.
15. The proposal would be glimpsed in some views from nearby listed buildings and the BMCA. However, the flyover is a dominant feature in between these heritage assets and the site, creating a clear visual break between them. The appeal site is within a larger commercial area where advertisements are common, and which forms part of the setting of these heritage assets. The addition of further advertisements in this context would not materially alter this setting. Therefore, given the intervening features, separation distance and commercial nature of the site and surrounds, the proposal would not harm the setting, and thereby the significance, of the BMCA or nearby listed buildings.
16. Nevertheless, due to its visual impact on the existing building and immediate surroundings, the proposal would result in significant harm to amenity.
17. I have taken into account Policies CC1 and CC5 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan Volume 1 (adopted September 2015), which seek to protect amenity and so are material in this case. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.
18. The Council's decision cites the Shop Front Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2013). I have not however been directed to a specific part of that document and did not find any guidance directly relevant to this type of advertisement. Therefore, it has not been determinative in my recommendation.

Other Matters

19. The proposal has been altered from a previous scheme, however for the reasons set out above it would still harm amenity. While the appellant suggests economic and environmental benefits would arise, I have no substantive evidence on this in relation to this particular proposal, so can afford these matters minimal weight, which does not outweigh the harm identified to amenity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Wilson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and agree with the recommendation. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR