



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2022

by C Harding BA(Hons) PGDipTRP PGCert MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/H/22/3293198

Footpath opposite Pono, St Giles Street, Norwich NR2 1JR

- 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 Ms Bella Noakes of British Telecommunication PLC against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01529/A, dated 18 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 December 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is two digital 75 inch LCD display screen, one on each side of the amended InLink unit.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposed advertisement would be displayed on a hub unit. This structure does not currently exist. I acknowledge the appellant's comment that a planning application was made for the proposed hub and that planning permission was refused. However, I confirm that I have had regard only to the proposed advertisement, and the appeal before made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on the amenity of the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Norwich City Centre Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies within Norwich City Centre Conservation Area (CA) and is located immediately to the north of Norwich City Hall, a large Grade II* listed building of the interwar period.
5. The CA is focused around the centre of Norwich, with an historic street pattern, and contains a wide range of buildings, both modern and historic. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal, the significance of the CA is derived from this historic street pattern and number of historic buildings contained within it. St Giles Street itself provides views in either direction of both St Giles Church and the Guildhall framed by historic buildings generally in commercial use, a number of which are listed.

6. Norwich City Hall is a large civic building constructed in the interwar period, in a Classical style with Art Deco detailing. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the significance of the listed building is derived from its impressive scale, function as a landmark building, and the quality of the overall architectural approach. It is described within its listing description as being one of the finest interwar municipal buildings in England.
7. The proposed advertisements would be located on a hub unit, within a paved area of public realm to the side and rear of Norwich City Hall. The proposed advertisements would not relate to the primary front elevation of the listed building and would instead relate to the side and rear elevations. However, these elevations reflect the austere architecture of the overall building and remain prominent. The location of large digital displays screens with the paved area adjacent to the listed building would detract from the austerity of the overall composition. It would therefore harm the setting of the listed building.
8. The area is notable, except for a small number of examples on more modern infill development, for the absence of illuminated advertisements on commercial buildings. Overall, the area retains an historic character, and advertisements are generally restrained in appearance. The proposed adverts would be static, and transitions between displays and levels of illumination could be controlled. However, given the character of the area, the introduction of overtly modern and vibrant digital displays would appear incongruous within this historic context.
9. The proposal would be to the detriment of the amenity of the area as a result. This harm would be exacerbated by the size of the advertisements and would not be mitigated by existing street furniture or other advertisements.
10. In reaching these conclusions, I have had regard to the excerpts from other Inspector decisions¹ within the evidence, however these examples appear to be located in other settlements. Therefore, they do not assist in my assessment of this proposal in this location, and my decision is based upon the particular characteristics of this locality.
11. Accordingly, the proposed advertisements would be harmful to the amenity of the area, including failing to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and harming the setting and significance of the Grade II* listed Norwich City Hall.
12. Consequently, although not determinative, the proposal would fail to accord with Policies DM3 and DM9 of the Norwich Local Plan Development Management Policies 2014, and Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014 which together, amongst other factors, seek to ensure proposals positively contribute to the area, conserve and enhance the setting of heritage assets, and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies. There would also be conflict with Paragraphs 197, 199 and 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

13. Even if the proposed hub would be slimmer in profile than the telephone boxes it would replace, and that the structure upon which the advertisements would

¹ APP/Z5630/H/18/3209488, APP/N5660/W/18/3199793, APP/Z41310/W/18/3205102 & APP/Z1775/Z/18/3211052

be mounted were to have wider public benefits in terms of improving electronic communications, I have had regard only to whether the proposed advertisements would harm the amenity of the area.

14. Equally, although the advertisements could contain public awareness messaging, the specific content of the advertisements is not a matter that falls within the scope of this appeal.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Harding

INSPECTOR