The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2023

by P B Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R3515/Z/22/3313148
Bourne Bridge Service Station, Wherstead Road, Ipswich IP2 8LR

- 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 Clear Channel UK against the decision of Ipswich Borough Council.
- The application Ref IP/22/00801/ADV, dated 12 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2022.
- The proposed development is the installation of an internally illuminated 48 sheet D poster (digital) and ancillary vertical meadow.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact on amenity.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a modest sized petrol filling station which fronts Wherstead Road, a main route into the town from its southern edge. It is adjoined to the north by a two-storey building containing a shop at ground floor with what appeared to be ancillary accommodation above and commercial buildings and land associated with the Orwell Yacht Club. Further to the north is the entrance to the West Bank Terminal of the port. To the south and east is the Orwell estuary and wider marina area with the historic Bourne Bridge and main road crossing further to the south. The Bourne Garden Centre lies opposite on the west side of Wherstead Road, to the north of which is two storey terraced housing.

4. The site lies within the Valley Character Area as identified in the Ipswich Urban Urban Characterisation Study SPD (2015) (UCS) which is described as the most dynamic part of the towns landscape characterised by both ancient settlement patterns and constantly changing landscape of industry, transport routes and dockside developments. The UCS divides the Area into further sub areas, the appeal site being within the Orwell Valley Character Sub Area. It is noted that historically most land uses have been connected with the river and dockside industry with the land being to the east and west of the Orwell estuary. More specific to the appeal site, it states that Wherstead Road forms a gateway to the town, which although diminished in significance by the construction of the West Bank Terminal in the 1970's, the distinctive relationship between the road and estuary can still be seen in the area of the marina near Bourne Bridge. It

states that new development in the important Bourne Bridge area should consider how it can be enhanced, including its public realm.

5. Whilst the immediate area of the appeal site is predominantly commercial in character, it does not contain large buildings and is adjoined by mainly two-storey development, with the appeal site itself of relatively modest scale. Notwithstanding this, I acknowledge that the wider area contains larger scale dockland development. However, as highlighted in the UCS, this part of Wherstead Road forms a gateway to the town and the historic relationship between the road and estuary can still be appreciated. Pleasant open views of this area, including the marina, are evident from Wherstead Road, particularly from the slightly elevated approach from the south.

6. I consider that the proposed advert would, in the context of the appeal site itself, appear unduly prominent notwithstanding that it would be below the ridge height of the adjoining retail building, against which it would be seen. It would extend to almost the same height as the canopy of the PFS and in approaches from the south, would be seen as a larger and higher advert than the majority of those around it, of which there are currently not many. Within this view, the garden centre is also relatively 'low key' with buildings set back from the road frontage and a modest scale and amount of signage.

7. In this immediate and wider context, and notwithstanding the pleasant 'vertical meadow' feature that would be provided at lower level as part of the sign, I consider that it would appear as an overly large and incongruous advertisement, exacerbated by its changing digital display that would increase and draw attention to its undue prominence in views in the street.

8. Therefore, I find that the proposed advertisement would detract from the amenity of the area. It would fail to comply with policies DM12(g) and DM26 of the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review (2022) which seek to ensure that the special character and local distinctiveness of Ipswich is respected and promoted by protecting and enhancing significant views that are considered to be important including those set out in the UCS, reinforcing the visual appearance of the immediate street scene and that advertisements respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building. It would also fail to satisfy the guidance in the UCS.

9. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure that advertisements are not poorly sited and designed.

Conclusions

10. I have noted the Appellant's suggested conditions to control levels of illumination and the nature and frequency of the image change. I also agree that the sign would not have any direct impact on the nearby residential properties given its location and orientation. However, neither of these matters are sufficient to outweigh the harm to amenity identified above.

11. I therefore conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR