

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2023

by John Whalley

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th June 2023

Appeal ref: APP/Z4310/Z/22/3321345

243 - 249 East Prescott Road, Liverpool L14 5NA

- 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 Alight Media Ltd against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application, ref. 22A/3467 dated 15 December 2022, was refused by a notice dated 29 March 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is: Installation of 1 x 48 sheet digital advertising display unit, measuring 6.2m wide x 3.2m high, and comprising pressed metal frame with sealed LED screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is not allowed.

Main issue

2. The main issue follows from the Council's opposition case, that is would the proposed digital sign be an apt feature or unduly prominent and inharmonious, having due regard to the need to preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area?

Appeal proposal and location

3. The Appellant company wish to erect an LED illuminated 48 sheet advertising panel measuring just over 6m wide and 3m depth adjacent to the western boundary in the customer car park of the Wynsors World of Shoes store at No. 243 - 249 East Prescott Road, Knotty Ash. This large retail store and its car park are just within the north-western edge of the Knotty Ash Conservation Area on land between the widely separated carriageways of the A57 trunk road, East Prescott Road.
4. There is a small strip of grassed and tree planted land west of the application site. The large modern complex of the Alder Hey Children's Hospital fronts the northern side of the A57. To the south side of the road, there is a long-established line of 2 storey houses, including commercial premises and small shops at each end of the row. The entrance alleyway to the Little Bongs group of Knotty Ash cottages is opposite the shoe store. The large Grade II listed building public house, The Wheatsheaf, is further west on the A57 at No. 186. The Knotty Ash Conservation Area extends westwards on the south side of the A57 as far as the Grade II listed building Lord Nelson public house at No. 146.

Considerations

5. There is a general duty under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, that in the exercise of planning functions, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, (s.71A of the Act).
6. The Appellants said the new sign would be in keeping with the character of the site. It would provide the Council with the opportunity to support the development of a landmark advertising location, which would represent a significant investment in sustainable development on behalf of the Appellant. They said the appeal proposal was consistent with current market requirements and planning developments. It would not be out of keeping with the visual amenity of the area. It would not appear as an unduly prominent or obtrusive feature by reason of its size and scale.
7. The Appellants made a case strongly supporting the trend towards the use of large illuminated advertisement signs, noting that such signs were not unusual features in typical street scenes of urban areas. However, in my view the Council were right to say that in this instance the proposed 48 sheet advertisement would be an inharmonious addition close to the edge of the Conservation Area. The Wynsors World of Shoes store, a building which predates the Conservation Area designation, already detracts from the appearance of the area. It also hides some views to the old community centre building at No 151. The proposed large illuminated sign would be prominent by design and purpose when seen from the west, adding further incongruity.
8. There are parts of the Conservation Area which have buildings and uses that already adversely affect the appearance and setting of such features as the houses of Little Bongs, the Wheatsheaf public house, the former brewery building and the Lord Nelson public house. I consider that the size, siting and illumination of the proposed large advertisement sign would not meet the test of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of this part of the Knotty Ash Conservation Area, adding discordancy and failing to protect the historic character of the Knotty Ash Conservation Area. Its installation would be contrary to local policy, particularly to Liverpool Local Plan policy UD1 which says all development should be of high design quality and make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of its location. The National Planning Policy Framework at para. 136 says that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. In my view, the proposed advertisement cannot be said to make a positive contribution to the character of this part of the Conservation Area, nor would it be fittingly sited in that Area.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Whalley

INSPECTOR