
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 September 2023

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 September 2023

Appeal A: Appeal Ref: APP/Q3060/W/22/3304296

Pavement Outside 5-13 Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham NG1 2BX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Martin Stephens (J C Decaux UK Limited) against the decision of Nottingham City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00867/PFUL3, dated 26 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display.
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Appeal B: Appeal Ref: APP/Q3060/Z/22/3304297

Pavement Outside 5-13 Upper Parliament Street, Nottingham NG1 2BX

- 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 Mr Martin Stephens (J C Decaux UK Limited) against the decision of Nottingham City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00868/ADV2, dated 26 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is an advertisement integrated into the Communication Hub unit and comprises a LCD portrait screen that will be used to show static illuminated content.
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Decision

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeals relate to the same site and the same proposed development, namely a multifunctional communications hub which, amongst other things, would have an illuminated digital advertisement display. To avoid unnecessary repetition, the 2 appeals have been dealt with in a single Decision letter but the appeals themselves have been considered based upon their own merits.
3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) require that applications for the display of advertisements are considered in terms of amenity and public safety. Although the reasons for refusal for Appeal B refer to policies contained in the Nottingham City Aligned Core Strategy: Local Plan Part 1 (CS) and the Nottingham Land and Planning Policies Development Plan Document: Local Plan

Part 2 (DPD), they are material considerations rather than being decisive in the determination of this appeal.

4. In respect of Appeal A, there are duties set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which require special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Also, there is a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. In advertisement appeals this is only relevant in so far as it relates to amenity. Where relevant, the statutory duties for designated heritage assets are echoed in CS Policy 10 and DPD Policy HE1.
5. Although the appellant has indicated a willingness to remove other advertisements from sites elsewhere within the Nottingham city centre, these appeals have been assessed on their own circumstances.
6. For clarity, the description for Appeal B has been adopted from the Council's Decision Notice which specifically refers to the proposed advertisement.

Main Issues

7. It is considered that the main issue for Appeal A is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the streetscene. For Appeal B, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity.

Reasons

8. The appeal site forms part of the footway along the south side of Upper Parliament Street where the street furniture is limited primarily to lamp-posts and traffic signs. Overall, the streetscene along this side of the street has an open and uncluttered appearance. Along the north side of the street there is a different character because of the higher level of street furniture, including sheltered bus stops.
9. By reason of its siting, design and scale, the appeal scheme would appear an imposing addition to the open streetscene with added visual prominence due to the proposed advertisement panel. This proposed advertisement would introduce a sizeable element of illumination that would be both visually prominent and incongruous within the context of the openness of the footway adjacent to the appeal site.
10. The site is situated within the extensive Old Market Square Conservation Area and is adjacent to Exchange Chambers. The Conservation Area encompasses primarily retail and commercial uses and includes buildings which appear to generally date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are variations in the character and appearance of the Conservation Area but the context of the appeal site is associated with the openness of the streetscene. Further, Express Chambers, located at the junction with a service road, is a noticeable Grade II Listed Building which possesses a Gothic revival style of architecture and is constructed of red brick.
11. By reason of siting, design and scale, when viewed from the east the appeal scheme would be visible against the backdrop of this Listed Building and would,

therefore, be within the setting of this designated heritage asset. The prominent visual effect of this contemporary proposed development, including the illumination of both the touch screen and the advertisement panel with its changing images, would visually compete with this Listed Building, harming its setting and detracting from its significance as a designated heritage asset. Further, and for the same reasons, the proposed development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, which is also a designated heritage asset, and would harm the open visual amenity of the streetscene along the south side of the street.

12. Although the degree of harm to the designated heritage assets would be localised and less than substantial, in accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This balancing exercise applies to Appeal A and is the type of exercise the appellant refers to as being required because of the Conservation Area encompassing commercial uses and the variations in character and appearance across the area.
13. In this case, the appeal scheme would provide a range of services, including WiFi, device charging, messaging facilities, free calls to landlines and charities, wayfinding and a defibrillator. It would be powered by renewable energy, would generate minimal waste and would include features to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour. The proposed development would provide a platform for other technologies such as environmental conditions, CCTV and key data, and could support businesses and the vitality of the area.
14. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications, these public benefits would be modest. The identified public benefits would fail to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets, which would not have a clear and convincing justification, as required by the Framework.
15. For the reasons given, it is concluded that for Appeal A the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene and, as such, it would conflict with CS Policies 10 and 11 and DPD Policies DE1 and HE1. In addition to heritage considerations, these policies also refer to development respecting and enhancing the streetscape and for adverts not to result in clutter. For the same reasons, it is concluded that Appeal B would harm the visual amenity of the area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, it is concluded that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR