



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023 by Darren Ellis MPlan MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/Z/23/3323385

Pavement Outside Redbridge Tube Station, Ilford IG4 5DQ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Thomas Johnston on behalf of JCDecaux UK against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref 0824/23, dated 21 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of an internally illuminated digital advertisement.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area and public safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Visual Amenity

4. The appeal site is next to Redbridge roundabout, which serves the A406 North Circular Road and the A12. These are two busy roads into and around London. The area to the north is a mix of commercial and residential uses and includes a range of fascia and freestanding signs, some of which are illuminated. They are however, in the main, more modest in scale and thus have a more recessive presence in the public realm. This contributes positively to the visual amenity of the area.
 5. The proposed digital advertising screen would be erected close to the station building and immediately adjacent to the roundabout. It would be visible to drivers using the roundabout, those approaching on Redbridge Lane East, and briefly to drivers travelling southbound on the A406 flyover above. The screen itself would only be on one side of the unit and face northwest.
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6. The proposal would introduce a large, permanent, illuminated feature that would draw the eye and appear conspicuous in the context of the surrounding area where advertising displays are generally more discreet and modest. Although the level of illumination could be controlled, the illuminated nature of the advertisement would only serve to highlight its unsympathetic scale and height, the visual impact of which would be exacerbated by its prominent location. The streetscape is varied and includes functional buildings. Nonetheless, the presence of such a large and prominent digitally illuminated display would not be sympathetic.
7. A number of items including bollards, street lighting, road signs and a telecommunications mast are already present in close proximity to the site. The proposed unit would therefore add further clutter to the pavement.
8. The proposed unit would obscure views of the grade II listed station building. The modernness of the screen would be significantly at odds with its historic and architectural significance. The setting of the building, whilst in a built up and mixed area architecturally and historically speaking, is one of a focal point identifying its function and contribution to the social history of the area. With these matters in mind, the proposal would be harmful to the setting of the listed building.
9. Taking this and the above into account, the scheme would not be acceptable in visual amenity terms. The Council has drawn my attention to Policy T2 of the London Plan 2016 (LP), which requires development proposals to deliver improvements that support the ten Healthy Streets Indicators in line with Transport for London guidance, and to Policies LP26, LP28 and LP33 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2018 which require development, including advertisements, to respect the character and amenity of the surrounding area and to preserve and complement heritage assets. As I have concluded that the proposed advertisement would harm visual amenity and the setting of a listed building, it would not accord with these policies. I have taken them into account insofar as they are material to the main issue.

Public Safety

10. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that advertisements are intended to attract attention but such at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. The cited examples include at roundabouts¹. The roundabout and the roads leading into it are very busy. This level of activity requires the concentration of drivers to be maintained. In that context, the proximity of the digital screen to the roundabout and where vehicles on Redbridge Lane East join it, together with its prominence and frequently changing display, would divert the attention of road users even momentarily. It would distract exactly at the point where full concentration on the road ahead is required even from drivers that are taking reasonable care of their own and others' safety.
11. The Road Safety Audit states that for this site there are no identified features of the scheme that could be removed or modified in order to improve safety. The Crash Map in the Council's report shows that there have been numerous accidents on the roundabout adjacent to the appeal site and where Redbridge

¹ Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306

Lane East joins the roundabout. There is nothing before me to demonstrate that the existing level of road safety would be maintained or improved.

12. For these reasons, the proposal would cause harm to public safety. The Council has drawn my attention to LP Policies T4(f), which requires development to not increase road danger. As I have concluded that the proposed advertisement would harm public safety, it therefore would conflict with this policy. I have taken it into account insofar as it is material to the main issue.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would result in a number of benefits, including reductions in energy consumption and pollution, fewer visits to the site for maintenance and the use of sustainable energy. However, PPG states that the powers to control advertisements under the Regulations may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. I am not therefore led to changing my findings or concluding that the harm I have found would, or could, be outweighed.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above, the proposed digital advertisement would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and to public safety, contrary to the Regulations. I therefore recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis I dismiss the appeal.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR