



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 September 2024

by L N Hughes BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/Z/24/3345596

Bus shelter opposite 960 Gleadless Road, Sheffield S12 2LL

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kevin Oldland of Alight Media Ltd against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01028/HOARD.
 - The advertisement proposed is a double sided digital 6 sheet advertising panel.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The site comprises a simple, clear glazed panelled bus shelter structure, with no existing advertisement within it. The proposal is for the display of a 6 sheet sized advertising panel within one end of a replacement bus shelter. The shelter itself could be erected through permitted development rights. For the avoidance of doubt, my determination is based only on the effect of the advertising panel.
4. The shelter lies close to a large intersection of Gleadless Road and Ridgeway Road, a strategic arterial route. This also encompasses a tram track junction and its associated columns and cables, with one line running past the appeal site. The shelter is sited within the eastern pavement in front of a small car park. Behind this lies an attractive stone church and a medical centre, with dwellings to the east and south east. Opposite on the western side of the road is a small row of retail and food outlets, and a public house with car park. Further retail and commercial units lie to the north of the intersection, and the area is designated in the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as a Local Shopping Area.
5. The setting overall has a commercial character, including the parking and the street level frontages. However, there is a wide open expanse between the built form of the road and tram infrastructure to the west of Gleadless Road, and that of the church and medical centre. The bus stop's glazing contributes to this by allowing views through. The trees and vegetation on the eastern side

- also soften the urban form, creating a marked separation from the more overt commercial character opposite.
6. The proposed advertising would represent an overtly modern and commercial addition into this streetscene, and would be unduly intrusive and prominent. It would draw attention away from the church and the vegetation, and introduce additional clutter into a side of the road which is currently very limited in this respect. It would unduly extend the commerciality of the opposite side of the road, an impact which would be noticeable from several directions. This would not be sufficiently mitigated by its incorporation within the bus shelter, as additional bulky massing would be created.
 7. This overall prominence would be further heightened due to the advertisement's illumination and changing images, particularly during hours of low natural light or darkness. This could not be sufficiently mitigated by the suggested conditions, which include restrictions on the display and transition of images, and on illumination levels. This is despite end of bus shelter advertising being generally commonplace over the past few decades, with the most up to date technology of LCD digital panels being increasingly common.
 8. Overall, the proposed advertising panel would harm the visual amenity of the area. It would also not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. In accordance with the Advertisement Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are relevant to visual amenity. Policy BE13 of the UDP requires advertisements to not harm the character or appearance of the area, and to relate in scale and design to their surroundings. Policy S10, amongst other matters, requires new development in shopping areas to be well designed, and of a scale and nature appropriate to the site.
 9. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') (2023) requires developments to add to the overall quality of the area, and be sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 141 identifies that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm visual amenity, it would conflict with the UDP Policies BE13 and S10, and with the Framework.

Other Matters

10. The Council has not highlighted any potential harmful impact to public safety, and I make the same conclusion.
11. The shelter previously hosted a backlit illuminated double sided advertising panel, removed between 2019 and 2020. However, there has now been an unobstructed view through the shelter for approximately 4 years, and the appeal proposal would be more prominent than this previous advertising for the reasons as described above. This material consideration therefore only provides minor support to the proposal, and so does not outweigh the harm.
12. Suggested benefits are improved public transport appeal, bus shelter funding and maintenance at no public cost, business rate income, display of urgent messaging or local event promotion, and better sustainability from reduced vehicle trips and poster use. Outdoor advertising is also stated to be vital to employment and commerce as a commercial activity and a service, with digital advertisements being more in keeping with the image of a major city.

13. However, the Regulations state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. Alongside the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance, there is therefore no indication that any of these suggested benefits can be taken into account.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the double sided digital 6 sheet advertising panel would be detrimental to the interests of visual amenity, and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

L N Hughes

Inspector