



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2024 by N Manley BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/24/3341368

Intercontinental London - The O2, 1 Waterview Drive, Greenwich, London SE10 0TW

- 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 Andrew Thornley of Arora Management Services Ltd against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 23/3878/A.
 - The proposal is described as '16 signs across the Intercontinental Hotel and Ballrooms (4 are retrospective).'
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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.

Preliminary Matters

3. The address stated in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice as this more accurately describes the site's location. I note that this has also been used in the appellant's appeal form.
4. The control of advertisements is exercisable only with respect to public safety and amenity. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that powers in this regard shall be exercised taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material and any other relevant factors.
5. Neither the Council nor any other party has raised any objection to the appeal from a public safety perspective. From the evidence before me, and my observations on site, I see no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. The appeal site is located at the northern tip of the Greenwich Peninsula, adjacent to the River Thames and west of The O2 Arena. It is occupied by a substantial multistorey hotel with hospitality facilities, featuring a stepped

elevation that recedes into three distinct terraces when viewed from the north and south. Due to its proximity to the river and the height of the appeal buildings, the site is highly visible from the surrounding area. Although there are some nearby residential developments, the character of the surrounding area is predominantly commercial.

8. While it is accepted that the appeal site is commercial in character, the cumulative totality of the advertisements proposed, together with their illumination and variation in design and size, would result in an excessive proliferation of advertisements across the appeal building. These would be highly visible from multiple public vantage points. This would harmfully clutter and detract from the building's relatively simple appearance and the immediate area, in which advertisements do not prominently feature. The proposed rooftop signage, in particular, would be uncharacteristic of the immediately surrounding area, irrespective of its precise design. The appellant has provided examples of rooftop signage at other sites. However, this is typically situated on smaller or less prominent buildings, in contrast with the proposals at this exposed site.
9. In addition, my attention is drawn to several other advertisements within the wider area. Nevertheless, I do not find these examples to be directly comparable in scale, design or context to those before me. Where prominent advertisements are visible in those other examples, these are typically limited to one advertisement across a single elevation. In any case, I do not have the planning context or individual site circumstances of those cases before me.
10. The appellant sets out that the high-level advertisements proposed would not be visible from the same vantage points as the lower-level advertisements and that those at low-level would be modest in size relative to the building's bulk. However, the proposal before me would result in a significant increase in signage overall, visible from multiple vantage points during both the day and night. This would include three large advertisements on the north elevation, six on the south, four on the east and five on the west, each differing in style, size, and position. In respect of the digital advertisements referenced, these differ from the current proposal as they are mounted on standalone structures at lower heights and follow a consistent placement pattern. The proposed advertisements, by contrast, would be attached to a host building at varying heights and positions, resulting in a more inconsistent arrangement.
11. Ultimately, the presence of multiple advertisements on individual elevations, as proposed, would lead to excessive levels of signage. This would harmfully clutter the simple appearance of the building and consequently harm the amenity of the surrounding area.
12. Given the above, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would harm the amenity of the appeal site and the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore conflict with policies D3 of the London Plan (adopted 2021) and DH1 and DH(f) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan (adopted 2014). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that advertisements respond to the existing character of a place and provide a positive relationship between the proposed and existing urban context and harmonise with the scale and character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge the appellant's request for a split decision and have considered this as an option. In particular, the appellant refers to the possibility of allowing two advertisements on the lower east elevation of the building, as well as their willingness to forgo two further advertisements positioned above the main entrance on the north and south elevations. While this is noted, the elevations would remain dominated by an excessive number of advertisements, harming amenity. Moreover, having regard to the description of the proposal, I am not satisfied that these elements are clearly physically and functionally discrete and/or that they can be satisfactorily separated from the proposed scheme in a split decision.
14. As the power to control advertisements under the Regulations is limited to considerations of public safety and amenity, the need for advertisements to assist guests in navigating the site, as well as the requirement for advertisements reflecting the various administrative operations and brands of the companies within the host building, are not matters for my consideration.
15. That the appeal site is not located within or near any conservation areas or world heritage sites, and that no public comments were received, are neutral matters which do not weigh for or against the proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A Price

~~18.~~ INSPECTOR