



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025

by C Rafferty LLB(Hons), Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Z/24/3349223

Centaur House, Bath Road, Hounslow TW5 9UJ

- 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 ARM Capital against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/0815.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a single digital billboard.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Regulations, National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Planning Practice Guidance state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of public safety and amenity. I have taken into account Policies CC1, CC2, CC4, and CC5 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan Volume 1 (the HLP). These policies seek to protect amenity and are material in this case but are not determinative in reaching a decision on the appeal.
3. Since the determination of this application, the Government has published a revised Framework. I am satisfied that the changes to the Framework do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal and proceeding without further consultation with the main parties would not be prejudicial to their respective cases. Where I have referred to the Framework in this decision, it is the most up to date version.
4. Reference is made in the appellant's evidence to the proposal causing 'less than substantial harm' to the surrounding conservation area. However, for the avoidance of doubt, paragraphs 212-216 of the Framework relate to heritage-related consent regimes under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and are not relevant to advertisement consent appeals. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed advertisement on: the visual amenity of the area; and the amenity of the residents of No. 801 Bath Road.

Reasons

Visual Amenity of the Area

6. The appeal site is located within the car park to Centaur House, in front of a blank brick wall that forms the rear elevation of No. 801 Bath Road. The immediate surrounds are mixed in nature, with a prevalence of commercial uses and dominated by the carriageway of Bath Road.
7. Views of the appeal site are experienced when travelling west along Bath Road both on foot and by car, where the range of structures close together such as Centaur House, Nos. 801-805 Bath Road, and taller residential development beyond lend a busy and cramped appearance to this part of the streetscene. This sense is heightened by the variety of illuminated and non-illuminated signage on the elevations and windows of Centaur House, which lends an element of visual clutter to the immediate surrounds.
8. The proposal is for a single digital billboard, measuring 7m by 5m, pole mounted at 3m above ground level, constructed from standard materials. It would be set back from the road and fitted with a sensor to control illumination. The proposal would not rotate and would feature instantaneously changing advertisements. Nevertheless, it remains that the scale and illumination of the proposal, along with its above ground position, would result in it being a notable addition.
9. The site is in a largely commercial setting, with multiple examples of street lighting, and there are currently no advertisements at the site. Nevertheless, the proposal would add a prominent feature to an already visually busy section of the street, introducing a further element of visual clutter and adding to the overdeveloped sense of this part of the streetscene. In addition, experienced close to and alongside the signage at Centaur House it would result in a proliferation of signs in the immediate area. This would result in harm to the visual amenity of the area.
10. The appeal site also lies in the Cranford Village Conservation Area (the CA), the special architectural interest of which derives from the early 18th century development at the heart of the village. Insofar as it relates to visual amenity, my duty under section 72(1) of the Act requires that I pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
11. I note the site's location at the southern edge of the CA, and the more commercial and less traditional nature of its immediate vicinity. Nevertheless, it remains clearly visible within the CA from the nearby entrance to High Street, along which traditional cottages and dwellings that make a clear positive contribution to the CA are evident. Furthermore, the dwellings at Nos. 803 and 805 Bath Road to the west of the site are noted in the CA appraisal as positive contributors.
12. The proposal would further distinguish the site from the remainder of the CA. Readily experienced when entering or exiting this section of High Street, it would be a stark feature compared to the more traditional development along that road. Furthermore, while the rear and side elevations of No. 801 Bath Road partially obscure views of Nos. 803-805 when travelling west both by car outside of the CA or on foot within the CA, the blank nature of these elevations ensures they do not diminish the ability to appreciate and understand Nos. 803-805 when they come into view. However, the proposal would sit directly in front of the blank elevation, where its contemporary appearance, illumination, and prominence would unduly

detract from these more traditional dwellings and the contribution they make to the CA when travelling in this direction. This would not preserve or enhance the overall character or appearance of the CA and would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area.

13. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harm the visual amenity of the area, it would conflict with Policies CC1, CC4, and CC5 of the HLP, insofar as they seek to ensure good design, including that of advertisements, that responds to the surrounding context and conserves heritage assets.

Visual Amenity – No. 801 Bath Road

14. The Council has raised concerns that the proposal would impact the living conditions of residents of No. 801 Bath Road, located to the rear of the site due to its location, size, and the glare that would be cast by the advertisement display.
15. However, there are no windows along the rear elevation of No. 801 Bath Road facing the site, nor does it benefit from any rear amenity space, such that views of the proposal would not be possible for residents of this dwelling. The advertisement would face away from No. 801. Its illumination would be controlled by an automatic light sensor, and the intensity of illuminance could be the subject of a planning condition. Taking all of this together, the proposal would not result in adverse effects to the amenity of residents of No. 801 Bath Road.
16. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would not harm the amenity of residents of No. 801 Bath Road, it would not conflict with Policies CC2 and CC5 of the HLP, insofar as they seek to ensure development, including advertisements, do not adversely impact residential amenity.

Other Matters

17. The proposal would have benefits in providing advertisement space for local businesses, including those that could not afford traditional paper billboard advertisements, and for the display of urgent information if required. It is further noted as a more sustainable method of display than paper billboards. The appellant states the proposal would also improve the experience of visitors to the area, increasing vitality. However, even if taken together, these benefits would not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

18. Having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

INSPECTOR