
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2025

by S Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/24/3352421

Land off Oldham Street and Spear Street, Manchester M4 1LF

- 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 Sainsburys Supermarkets Ltd against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 140006/AO/2024.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1 no. internally illuminated projecting sign and 1 no. internally illuminated fascia sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and advertisement consent is granted for the installation of 1 no. internally illuminated projecting sign and 1 no. internally illuminated fascia sign at Land off Oldham Street and Spear Street, Manchester M4 1LF in accordance with the terms of application ref: 140006 and subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit the advertisements that form the subject of this appeal had already been installed. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.
3. I have used the description of development as set out in the Council's decision notice in the banner heading, and in my formal decision above, as this more accurately and succinctly describes the proposal than that on the application and appeal forms.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the advertisements on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The building on which the advertisements have been installed, 76-82 Oldham Street, is a new 8 storey building containing commercial units on the ground floor with residential apartments above. The appeal relates to a ground floor unit, occupied by a Sainsburys local convenience store, which fronts Oldham Street.
6. The site is located in the Stephenson Square Conservation Area, a vibrant area of the city comprising a mix of residential, retail, food and drink and office uses accommodated in buildings of a variety of ages and styles set out in a regular

street pattern. Oldham Street reflects that general character, and the variety of signage present adds to the vibrancy of the area.

7. The fascia sign in this case comprises individual acrylic, internally illuminated letters some 0.25m high attached to a frame. It is approximately 2.6m wide. The shopfront, which has a gold-coloured frame, is recessed back from the face of the building. The fascia sign has been positioned within that recess, immediately above the entrance door, spanning two of the vertical glazing panels. Given its limited size and scale, the advertisement is proportionate to the shopfront and moreover, as a result of its set back, height above ground level and design, is discreet compared with other fascia advertisements along Oldham Street. The slight off-set to the left side of the glazing panels has little bearing on its visual effect and to my mind the sign is sensitively designed to complement the architectural quality of the building.
8. I note the Council's concern that the submitted plans indicate the frame the lettering is mounted on, as being finished in silver. However, as constructed, the colour of the frame matches that of the shopfront and in any event is largely obscured by the lettering. Accordingly, it is not a discordant feature.
9. The rectangular, double sided projecting sign constructed in aluminium is also internally illuminated. It is positioned on the face of the building some 2.4m above ground level, has a horizontal format and extends some 0.95m from the face of the building. No fixings are visible. I have noted the Council's concern relating to the depth of the sign which, at some 100mm deep, is not insubstantial. However, the sign does not appear dominant or discordant and its contemporary appearance reflects the character of the building. I acknowledge that slimmer projecting signs have permitted elsewhere in the city. Nevertheless, I can only deal with this proposal on its merits.
10. The proposal departs from the signage strategy for the whole building agreed as part of a condition of the original planning permission¹. That strategy requires, amongst other things, that fascia signs are positioned inside the glass frontage. I recognise that the signage strategy has been adopted to ensure consistency across the building, but it is not determinative in my decision. Internal fascia signs are not common in the conservation area, and even if it results in some variation in signage on what is a substantial building, I am unconvinced the proposal is detrimental to the amenity of the area or the character or appearance of the conservation area.
11. The Council has referred in its decision notice to Policies DC14, DC15 and DC18.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and Policies DM1, EN1, EN3, CC9 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy. Whilst not decisive I have had regard to the policies as material considerations noting particularly the need to preserve or enhance heritage assets and the general design criteria for new advertisements.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the signs are acceptable in terms of their impact on visual amenity and as such the appeal is allowed.

S Ashworth INSPECTOR

¹ Planning application ref: 110074/FO/2015/C2