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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 December 2013

**by Bridget M Campbell BA(Hons) MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 2 January 2014**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/H/13/2199286**

**Land in front of signal box (opposite junction with Crinan Street), York Way, London N1 9AB**

- 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 Mr M Swindles, Primesight Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
  - The application Ref 2013/0948/A, dated 14 February 2013, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2013.
  - The advertisement proposed is two internally illuminated advertisement hoardings.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

## Reasons

3. The appeal site is situated within the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area and is within Sub Area 2, described as forming the heart of the Conservation Area. The area is dominated by the two major, Grade 1 listed, landmark stations and is also the subject of some major new development. Nonetheless, the stations remain the dominant elements in terms of both scale and use. The Council's Conservation Area Statement describes the area as having "a robust industrial character, mostly Victorian".
4. York Way is a straight road with a north-south alignment and it forms part of the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area. It also marks the eastern side of Kings Cross Station and its southern end is dominated by the long massive return flank of the station building located at the back edge of the footpath. Progressing along the road, there are long views back towards the rear of the station over the railway boundary wall and across an open swathe provided by the sweep of railways lines leaving the station sheds. From a considerable distance, the monumental arches of the two sheds and the rear of the return flank of the building dominate the view in a southerly direction along the road with the clock tower of St Pancras visible beyond.
5. The signal box is located towards the northern end of this enclave of exclusively railway development, set back from the York Way frontage behind the railway boundary wall. It is part and parcel of the functional railway setting

which in turn forms the setting for the listed railway terminus. The two advertisement hoardings, comprising backlit 48 sheets, would be sited between the signal box and railway boundary wall. They would be mounted on a monopole at such a height as to be seen above the wall and would be angled so that one would be seen when approaching along the road from the north and the other when approaching from the south.

6. The Appellant points out that the signal building is identified in the Conservation Area Statement as a feature that detracts from the character of the conservation area. The signal box is not an attractive structure but it has a simple utilitarian form and functionally it is not out of place. It is an unassuming building with a simple appearance and lack of detail which does not draw the eye.
7. The introduction of two advertisements in front of this building would not represent a visual improvement. Rather, the eye would be drawn to this particular location, that being the purpose of advertisements. The hoardings would interrupt and compete with views along the road of the railway infrastructure on its western side, and most particularly in views towards the rear of Kings Cross Station. The somewhat bland appearance of the signal box in this location is preferable to the busyness of the two substantial advertisement hoardings proposed. The advertisements would be unduly prominent and would intrude into and thus erode the robust Victorian railway character along this side of the road to a greater degree than the existing signal box. They would introduce clutter where none is apparent at present. In addition, they would detract from the setting of nearby modern development of a particularly high standard such as Kings Place on the opposite side of the road.
8. The Appellant points out that the advertisements would not affect any significant views as defined in the Conservation Area Statement. Nonetheless it is not only those views which positively contribute to the quality of the area. In addition, I cannot agree that a conclusion can be drawn that the setting of Kings Cross would not be affected simply because of the separation distance between the site and the building. For the reasons given I have found that the proposed advertisements would fail to preserve the setting of Kings Cross Station and would fail to preserve the character and the appearance of the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. In this respect there is conflict with the relevant policies of the Development Plan and in particular with those which seek to preserve and enhance the Borough's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings.
9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement hoardings would damage the character and appearance of the area and would thus be detrimental to the interests of amenity.

*Bridget M Campbell*

Inspector