
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2013

by G J Rollings BA(Hons) MAUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 December 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/H/13/2208080

University College Hospital, 235 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BU

- 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 JCDecaux (UK) Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2013/6400/A, dated 2 October 2013, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2013.
 - The advertisement proposed is a single display screen built into the building facade.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the visual impact of the proposed advertisement on the street scene and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The advertisement screen would be located in an elevated position on a prominent corner, at one of the main traffic routes into the West End of London. The area around the site is commercial in nature, and the high volume of traffic and pedestrians passing the site contributes to its busy character.
4. The proposal is an amended form of one previously dismissed at appeal¹. The main differences in the current proposal are the dimensions and elevation of the screen, and the manner in which it is integrated into the building façade. Despite these differences, the general principles between the two proposals are broadly similar. I have therefore attached some weight to the previous appeal decision.
5. The area contains a mix of architectural styles, and the modern building on which the screen is proposed dominates its corner. Although there are advertising signs visible from the site, there is a remarkable lack of larger signs, save for those directed towards motorists using the Euston Underpass. Nonetheless, the lack of large-scale advertising is such that it does not form a major contribution to the overall character of the area.

¹ Appeal ref: APP/X5210/H/12/2189379, decision date 11 July 2013.

6. In this context, the addition of a large, illuminated advertising screen would appear out of character. As noted above, there is no one architectural style apparent in the area, but several modern buildings command more attention than others, drawing attention away from the overall street scene, due to their scale, massing and design. The building on which the proposed advertisement would be located is one such example, and despite the appellant's assertion that the sign would respect the architectural integrity of the building, it would result in additional attention being drawn away from the street scene towards the building. This would lead to the screen appearing unduly dominant within the context of its surroundings.
7. The appellant also notes the loss of the human scale in the area. The altered elevation and height of the screen, compared with the previous appeal proposal, improves the relationship between the screen and the street level, but still serve to alienate the pedestrian by drawing attention away from street level. As such, the proposal would result in a visual marker that would jar with overall character of the area, resulting in a negative visual impact.
8. I have taken into consideration the design changes to the screen, compared with the previous appeal proposal, and the appellant's comments regarding the need for economic growth and appropriateness under the *National Planning Policy Framework*. I have also given serious consideration to the contribution of the screen to the appellant's role in the community, in that it would display relevant health-based messages, as well as other public information. Whilst I consider that the proposal does not have a severe impact on the appearance of the building itself, these considerations do not outweigh my strong concerns regarding the harmful visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding area.
9. The Council has drawn my attention to its *Camden Core Strategy (2010) Policy CS14*, and *Camden Development Policies (2010) Policy DP24*, which it considers to be relevant to this appeal. I have taken them into account as a material consideration, and consider that the proposal would conflict with these policies, for the reasons set out above. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and/or public safety. Consequently, these policies have not been a decisive consideration in reaching my decision.
10. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Rollings

INSPECTOR