

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27th April 2020

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/H/20/3259631
131-143 Belsize Road, London, NW6 4AD

- 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 the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The application Ref 2020/2466/A, dated 6 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is a) Display of 2 double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting signs (signs 1 and 6) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 2); b) Display of a double sided internally illuminated (lettering only) projecting sign (sign 7) and an internally illuminated fascia lettering sign (sign 8).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the advertisement proposed is taken from the Council's decision notice. It relates to advertisements which formed part of a wider application for "new sliding doors, ATM and ram raid bollards, louvers and display of advertisements in order to support the operation of the Sainsbury's unit."
3. The Council granted consent for the first part of the advertisement proposed, relating to signs 1 and 6. However, consent was refused for the second part of the advertisement proposed, relating to signs 7 and 8. This appeal is therefore concerned with that part of the advertisement proposed insofar as it relates to signs 7 and 8.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located at a busy and prominent crossroads, where Belsize Road adjoins Abbey Road. It is located within an area dominated by the presence of residential development, largely in the form of flats, in buildings ranging in height from three stories to very tall residential blocks.
 6. In addition to these residential uses, there are a number ground floor commercial units below flats in properties along Belsize Road and Abbey Road, as well as a couple of nearby community uses.
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7. The retail unit the subject of this appeal forms part of the ground floor of a large block of residential flats. During my site visit, I observed that, as one approaches the appeal site along Abbey Road from the south east, this large residential block appears prominently in its surroundings.
8. Whilst tall, large, prominently located and distinctive in appearance from other buildings, the residential block appears in keeping with the predominant residential character of the area. Indeed, when seen from the south east in particular, the clean lines and attractive design of the block make a strong, positive contribution to the area's residential qualities.
9. The proposal the subject of this appeal would result in the presence of two internally illuminated signs which would be highly visible from the south east.
10. I find that these signs would introduce a form of visual clutter that would jar with the appearance of the host building when seen from the south east. The internally illuminated advertisements would draw the eye, during day and night, as visually intrusive, incongruous additions. The advertisements would add commercial clutter and would appear out of character with and detract significantly from, the building's domestic qualities.
11. Whilst the advertisements are aimed at signifying the presence of a retail unit, I noted during my site visit that the main frontage of the retail unit is clearly visible in its surroundings and that advertisements other than those the subject of this appeal already signify its presence to a considerable degree. In this regard, I find that the advertisements the subject of this appeal would result in an over-proliferation of signage, to the detriment of visual amenity.
12. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the advertisement would be detrimental to visual amenity. This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and to Camden Local Plan (2017) policies D1 and D4, which together amongst other things, protect visual amenity.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR