The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2014

by Jim Metcalf BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 February 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/H/13/2201854
190 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 6BQ

- 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 Alan Mottershead against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref 102163/AOH/2013/N1, dated 2 April 2013, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2013.
- The advertisement proposed is 2 x 48 sheet advertisement panels.

Procedural Matter

1. One 48 sheet panel is in position on the site in a generally similar position to one of the panels proposed. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement panels on the character and appearance of the street scene along Oldham Road. In reaching my decision I have paid special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Ancoats Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Policy DC15.1 of the City of Manchester Development Plan (UDP) refers to the display of advertisements. I have taken this policy, and others referenced on the decision notice, into account as material considerations. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may only be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. UDP and CS policies cannot be decisive.

5. The advertisement panels would screen a rubble strewn plot that remains unused following demolition work and is bounded by a temporary fence and the existing panel. This panel adjoins a modest row of commercial properties. On the other side the site adjoins another vacant plot with two 48 sheet advertisement panels. This stretch of Oldham Road, on the approach to the city centre, is generally commercial with a large sorting office opposite. The site sits in the Ancoats Conservation Area whose boundary runs along Oldham Road.

6. A number of large hoarding style advertisements are displayed at intervals along Oldham Road. One opposite, across Oldham Road, was allowed on appeal in 2012. Two appeals, in 2002 and 2011, were dismissed for 48 sheet advertisement panels on the site next to the appeal site and currently occupied by two such panels. On these occasions the respective Inspectors found that the panels would 'appear as an overlarge feature' and would 'appear over dominant in the street scene'.

7. The existing panel on the appeal site sits slightly angled to the road and is unrelated in scale and proportion to the adjacent modestly scaled terraced property. The proposed panels would form a barrier about 12.8m long and 4.8m high that would be a dominant feature in the street scene especially when seen from across Oldham Road.

8. This particular stretch of Oldham Road does not have the architectural and historic features characteristic of the core of the Ancoats Conservation Area. However, it does function as an entry point to the area and the advertisement panels, seen in some views together with those on the adjoining site, would be a large, intrusive, over dominant feature that would detract from the visual appearance of the street scene along Oldham Road and the character and appearance of the Ancoats Conservation Area. This would be at odds with the need to maintain strict control over the display of outdoor advertisements in conservation areas to ensure that they do not spoil the appearance of the area.

9. In reaching this conclusion I note that both the Ancoats Conservation Area and the Oldham Road corridor have evidently been the focus of some improvement and regeneration in recent years. The appeal proposal would act to undermine such regeneration and this reinforces my concerns. In this context although the advertisement panels would screen the currently unsightly condition of the site it could equally detract from efforts to improve the environment of the area, evident elsewhere in Ancoats.

10. The appellant has submitted details of what he regards as inconsistent decisions about the displays of hoardings elsewhere in Manchester. However, I have considered the proposal on its own merit, in the context of the immediate surroundings. Even displayed for a temporary period the advertisement panels would, for the reasons set out, detract from the visual appearance of the street scene along Oldham Road and the character and appearance of the Ancoats Conservation Area.

Jim Metcalf

INSPECTOR