



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2024

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30.04.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/24/3337742

201 Ground Floor, Deansgate, Manchester M3 3NW

- 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 Red Engine against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 138433/AO/2023, dated 27 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is display of blade projecting sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the advertisement as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations and the following additional conditions:-
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Site Plan – drawing ref. 1634-04 Rev E; Proposed Deansgate Elevation – drawing ref. 1643-18 Rev F; and Proposed Jackson's Row Elevation – drawing ref. 1643-24.
 - 2) The maximum luminance shall not exceed 300cd/m² in brightness at any time.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed projecting sign on amenity.

Reasons

3. No.201 Deansgate (No.201) is a commercial building located on the corner of Deansgate and Jackson's Row, within the Deansgate Conservation Area (the CA). In accordance with the statutory duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I am, therefore, required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the CA.
4. No.201 has a contemporary architectural design with a full height glazed frontage to Deansgate flanked by red brick and stone dressings. On the Deansgate and Jackson's Row corner are two stone columns forming a ground floor undercroft, with a set back entrance to the building. A single projecting illuminated sign is proposed to be mounted around 3.16m from the ground on the Deansgate frontage of the column closest to the corner.

5. The sign would be around 0.865m wide by 0.865m high (of circular design) with bronze effect fret cut 'Electric Shuffle' letters. It would be mounted on brackets that would project around 1m from the stone column, so would be visible and prominent, as intended, when travelling in either direction on Deansgate. Although the depth of the sign itself would be 0.8m (deeper than other signage in the area, referred to by the Council), its overall proportions I find modest and appropriate to the scale of the column on which it would be mounted.
6. I recognise that No.201 was designed by Andy Robson, who also designed a number of major buildings in the City Centre, and that the two columns (as well as the glazed frontage, combined with brick and stone) are important architectural details of the host building. The column does, however, form part and parcel of the commercial building (rather than a feature in its own right) and I do not find that the position, or design, of the proposed sign would cause particular harm to the composition of the building, or its overall appearance. Nor would it result in visual clutter at the entrance to the building.
7. I observed on my site visit that the wider area, and this part of the Deansgate CA, is characterised by large, mixed-use but predominantly commercial buildings where associated signage is common. I note the Council's evidence that the projecting sign at No.205 Deansgate is not authorised, but I nonetheless found projecting signs, of various heights above ground, position on buildings, and design, to form part of the character and appearance of Deansgate. The modest projecting sign proposed would assimilate well within this context.
8. I also saw that the appeal site is close to a number of statutory listed buildings, notably Elliot House and 184 and 186 Deansgate (both Grade II listed) which are opposite. Although S66(1) of the Act does not apply to applications for Advertisement Consent, the effect on these listed buildings is material to the consideration of the effects on visual amenity. As described above, given its modest proportions, and the commercial surroundings, I find the proposed sign would have no bearing on the way in which the listed buildings opposite are experienced or appreciated.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed sign would preserve the character and appearance of the Deansgate CA, and would not otherwise detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area.
10. The Council and appellant have drawn my attention to policies in The City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995) and the Core Strategy (2012). The proposed sign would not conflict with these policies in so far as they are relevant to the appeal. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. In my determination of this appeal, the Council's policies have not, therefore, of themselves been decisive, but are material considerations.
11. I also find no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect the quality and character of places from poorly sited and designed advertisements and ensure that the historic environment is protected.

Conditions

12. The Regulations imposed five standard conditions. I have included a condition with regard to the approved plans in the interests of certainty. The Council has also suggested a condition to limit illuminance to 300cd/sqm which is higher than the 250cd/sqm proposed by the appellant, and I find acceptable in this case to protect visual amenity.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR