

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

by Martin H Seddon BSc MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 October 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/R5510/W/22/3310435

Pavement outside 44 Joel Street, Northwood HA6 1NZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Thomas Johnston, JCDecaux UK Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon
 - The application 77308/APP/2022/1705 dated 25 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a multi-functional Communication Hub including advertisement display.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/R5510/H/22/3310440

Pavement outside 44 Joel Street, Northwood HA6 1NZ

- 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 Thomas Johnston, JCDecaux UK Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 77308/ADV/2022/50 dated 25 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a multi-functional Communication Hub including advertisement display.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have considered Appeal A and Appeal B on their own individual merits. However, as the communications hub and advertisement are linked, I have dealt with them together to avoid duplication.
4. In respect of Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) make it clear that advertisements are subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Whilst not decisive, I have taken relevant policies into account as a material consideration.

Main Issues

5. The main issue in appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. The main issue with respect to appeal B is the effect on the amenity of the area, as there is no dispute between the main parties regarding the effect on public safety.

Reasons

Appeal A

Effect on character and appearance

6. The site is a section of pavement fronting 44 Joel Street and within the Northwood Hills town centre. No.44 Joel Street has a supermarket at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. The area comprises distinctive three storey buildings with mainly commercial and retail uses at ground floor level. Northwood Hills has been the subject of a town centre improvement scheme, which included the placement of street furniture. Joel Street and the part known as The Broadway has a central highway reservation lined with a row of trees. This gives the road an attractive verdant character. The pavement is relatively wide near the appeal site, with street furniture including seating, a litter bin, and cycle stand in a group nearby.
7. The hub unit would measure around 2.630 m in height by 1.338 m in width and 0.317 m in depth. There would be a projecting canopy over the equipment at one side of the unit, and a display screen to the rear, measuring around 1.895 m by 1.065 m. The illuminated screen would operate with a 10 second delay between each static display image.
8. The hub would add undue clutter to the street scene because of its siting, height and bulk, with its prominence increased by the proposed advertisement display. Even acknowledging the scale of surrounding buildings, the proposed hub would appear as a dominant feature in the footway. Conditions have been suggested by the appellant relating to the rate and form of image change and illumination levels, but these would not outweigh the harm to the amenity of the area.
9. The proposed hub would provide a range of services, including Wi-Fi, phone charging, messaging facilities, free calls to landlines and charities, wayfinding and a defibrillator. It would be powered by renewable energy, with a solar panel to provide additional energy for the canopy lighting. The appellant advises that it would generate minimal waste during its lifetime. It would include design features to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour, plus an emergency call button. It could support businesses, provide information on local events, and assist the vitality of the area, contributing towards the development of a 'smart' city. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications, these benefits would be modest and would not outweigh the harm from the proposal to the character and appearance of the area.
10. With regard to Appeal A, for the reasons given the hub would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore fail to comply with policies D3 and D8 of the London Plan

(2021), policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies, policies DMHB 11, 12, 13A and 21 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two – Development Management Policies and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as they seek to ensure good design that is related to local context.

Appeal B

11. Conditions have been suggested by the appellant relating to the rate and form of image change and illumination levels for the display panel, but the large illuminated panel would be unduly prominent in the street scene. Therefore regarding Appeal B, for the reasons given above, and despite the suggested conditions, the proposed advertisement display would harm the amenity of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, both Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Martin H Seddon

INSPECTOR