



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February, 2025

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P4225/Z/25/3358659

Manchester Motor Mart, 109-119 Bolton Road, Bury BL8 2NW

- 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 Elite Billboard against the decision of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is: 71209/ADV.
 - The application is for erection of 1 no. digital LED advertisement display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the visual amenity of the area.

Procedural Matter

3. Since the determination of this application a revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was published on 12 December 2024 (updated 7 February 2025) whose main focus was not directly relevant to this appeal. Nevertheless, I have determined this appeal in accordance with the revised provisions within the Framework.

Reasons

4. The proposal before me seeks permission for an internally illuminated LED digital advertisement screen to be fixed to the first floor of an existing building that is located along a busy road that is Bolton Road. The screen would measure around 3m high by 6m in length and would be located around 2.5m above ground floor level.
5. The building upon which the advertisement would be fixed appears to be a nineteenth century structure of red brick. It relates to other buildings further along Bolton Road through an existing shopfront that largely maintains the proportions and simple design of a traditional commercial premises. To the end elevation the side gable appears to have been the subject of historic demolition and, as a result, this end elevation is white rendered and fronts onto an existing parking area associated with the operator and a car wash that sits adjacent.

6. This end elevation has an external stair, doorway and two windows to the first floor level as well as a doorway and windows into the ground floor unit. I saw on my site visit that the adjoining building contained a large paper advertisement panel but was absent of any advertisements at the time. Although in isolation, this site appears to be of a different and lower quality than much of the rest of the town, the building can nevertheless clearly be seen further along Bolton Road around the area of St Stephen Street and as such is visible from long distance views where this site is seen in the context of more historic areas and the hills beyond.
7. The proposed sign would be affixed to the first floor side elevation of this building and would entirely cover the two windows at the upper level. The sign would be particularly prominent on approach to the traffic lights just past the building. Although the end elevation is not of high architectural merit, and although this particular area of the town is of a more commercial nature, the site is still within the context of intact and higher quality areas of townscape, including long distance views beyond the town.
8. In assessing this appeal I consider firstly that the loss of fenestration to this elevation would represent an erosion of townscape quality in this location as well as harm the provision of natural surveillance that the building is capable of promoting. The obstruction of these two first floor windows would therefore not only erode the visual integrity of the building but it would also eliminate the opportunities for natural surveillance, which, in turn, contributes to public safety and active frontage along this part of Bolton Road.
9. To add a large digital display over the windows would compound this harm and would also have a far reaching impact further up Bolton Road where the building would still be visible from. As a result, there would be harm sustained along this principal approach into Bury town centre through the erosion of quality caused by added signage and the effect it would have upon the townscape quality and safety of the area.
10. Ultimately the erection of such a large scale advertisement here represents a poor design solution for this site and would cause harm to the visual amenities of the area. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would be in conflict with Policies EN1/7 and EN1/9 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan as well as the aspirations for good design and placemaking as contained within the Framework itself.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons above, taking into account the particular criteria of this proposal, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR