
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2014

by Simon Hand MA

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

Decision date: 20 October 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/H/14/2220197

54 St James Street, London, SW1A 1JT

- 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 KDT Management Ltd against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref 14/03521/ADV, dated 14 April 2014, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2014.
 - The advertisement proposed is a temporary scaffold shroud advertisement comprising a fixed 1:1 architectural image of the building façade with an inset general information and poster display area with external illumination.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed shroud would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St James Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. St James Street is a significant street in central London, lined by handsome buildings, many of them listed, with views down the street terminated by St James Palace. Although it is busily commercial, the facades of the buildings are generally sober and refined. There does not seem to be a lot of advertising in the street and what there is corresponds to the sober and dignified commercial frontages.
4. By way of contrast several buildings are undergoing refurbishment or rebuilding and are covered in scaffolding with white shrouds of varying quality including the building immediately next door to the appeal site. One however, opposite the site, is partly covered in a teal coloured shroud with the simple legend "St James's London" on it.
5. I agree with the appellant that DES8 does seem to be highly restrictive. It is difficult to see how a large scale advertising shroud could ever be "sensitively related to its local context with a minimum of obvious commercial advertising content...". In my view, scaffold shrouds with advertising have become a typical part of a busy urban street scene. Because they are clearly related to the work going on behind the scaffold and so are an obviously temporary feature their impact on the street scene is quite different from that of a

permanent advertisement of the same size. They provide colour and interest to what would otherwise be ugly scaffolding, often partly covered by tatty short term shrouding, and they announce a redevelopment that is being undertaken, hopefully, to the long term improvement of the street scene in general. Consequently, as long as their impact on nearby valued landscapes and buildings is not overwhelming, as a short term measure to cover scaffolding many proposals would seem to offer only a benefit to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6. In this case however, I consider the street scene is not the sort of busy commercial area that could absorb a large scale advertisement even on a temporary basis. The character of this part of the Conservation Area is not one where large scale advertisements are to be found and the proposal would stand out most harmfully against the sober and dignified buildings of the street.
7. In particular it would serve to highlight and draw attention to the other un-shrouded but scaffolded buildings in the street and would contrast unfavourably with the simple shroud on the building opposite. Consequently, even as a temporary feature I consider the proposed shroud with its large scale advertisement would appear to be incongruous and harmful and so would not preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Simon Hand

Inspector