Moat Lane Car Park, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5BD

Display of 1 no. illuminated large format advert hoarding

Applicant: Signature Outdoor Ltd
Vienna House, International Square, Birmingham International Park, Bickenhill Lane, Birmingham, B37 7GN

Agent:

Recommendation
Approve Temporary

1. Proposal

1.1. The installation of a 490 sq.m advertisement hoarding on the side of an existing multi-storey car park measuring 14 m tall X 35 m wide. The hoarding would be constructed of vinyl PVC and externally illuminated from above to a brightness of 600 cd/sq.m. Details of the brackets to affix the banner have been provided; these show that the advert would be some 0.76m from the car park’s façade.

1.2. In addition to the hoarding ‘seasonal dressing’ is proposed to the Moat Lane (east facing) elevation. These banners would take the form of strips of PVC material to each car park level in an attempt to enliven the elevation. They would be affixed with other similar brackets to those proposed for the main hoarding or bungee attachments. These elements would not be illuminated and measure 25.38m X 1.68m and 61.18m X 1.53m.

1.3. In addition, suicide prevention measures in the form of wire mesh inserts are shown on the proposed plans. These measures require full planning permission and would be the subject of a separate planning application.

1.4. In response to officer’s comments the scale of the banner has been reduced from the originally proposed dimensions of 16m X 40m (640 sq.m). In addition a commitment from the applicant to improve lighting behind the panel and CCTV on the rooftop level has been secured.

Elevations and Illustrative Views

Seasonal Dressing with Suicide Prevention Mesh

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1. The application site is occupied by a multi-storey car park of concrete construction.
2.2. To the front of the site Digbeth and Moat Lane form a gyratory arrangement, with Moat Lane providing vehicular access into the car park. There are existing advertisements to the front of the car park including:

- Three 48 sheet internally illuminated poster panels attached to the ground floor of the car park
- A cylindrical free-standing advertisement street feature display situated upon the highway verge
- Two further 48 sheet externally illuminated panels on the Bradford Street frontage of the wholesale markets site
- A wall mounted internally illuminated panel display situated at the corner of Bradford Street and Barford Street
- A digital panel attached to the chamfered gable end of Smithfield House
- Two side-facing poster panels located within the grounds of the college and shops fronting Digbeth

2.3. The site backs on to the Wholesale Markets to the west and south. Bradford Street is situated to the east and contains a mixture of uses including a college, offices and industrial units (some of which are vacant). There are offices and colleges to the north with the Bull Ring shopping centre beyond.

Location
Street View

3. Planning History

3.1. 23.10.1969 – 21984/007 - Approval – Wholesale markets officers car parks
3.2. 30.09.1982 – A08795/12 – Approval – 3 X 48 Sheet advertisement display panels
3.3. 29.03.2003 – 2003/01173/PA – Approval - Display of 1 internally illuminated advert column

4. Consultation/PP Responses

4.1. Transportation Development – No objection however a condition is required requiring suitable lighting to be provided within the car park in response to the impact of the proposed mesh advertisement shroud.

4.2. West Midlands Police – No objection however makes specific recommendations to improve the car park environment and reduce the risk of crime and/or suicide such as improvements to the CCTV system, lighting levels and Samaritans literature.

4.3. Southside Business Improvement District consulted without response.

5. Policy Context

5.1. Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005; the draft Birmingham Development; Plan; Large Format Banner Advertisements (2008) which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

6. Planning Considerations
6.1. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (2007) restrict Local Planning Authorities to consider only amenity and public safety when determining applications for consent to display advertisements.

AMENITY

6.2. The NPPF, at policy 67, states that poorly placed adverts can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment. It adds that only those advertisements that will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building to their surroundings should be subject to a Local Authority’s detailed assessment. Finally it states that cumulative impact should be considered.

6.3. The SPD states that a “large format banner will only normally be permitted where a building is to be scaffolded for building or related work” and that a “no elevation should normally contain an advertisement element greater than 500sq.min area or 40% of the scaffolded elevation, whichever is the lesser”.

6.4. The SPD adds “banner adverts should be removed as soon as the relevant work...is complete” and “the advertisement consent will last no longer than the agreed building programme or one year, whichever is the shorter. Consent for continued display in accordance with this policy would not be unreasonable withheld”.

6.5. The application site is within an urban and commercial city-centre context and is not in close proximity to residential properties. The proposed advertisement banner, as amended, would be in proportion with the existing car park and be compliant with the SPD’s maximum of 500 sq.m. Whilst no works are currently ongoing the car park will be likely to form part of the wholesale market redevelopment proposals.

6.6. I conclude that the cumulative impact with existing advertisements, including when viewed from the Conservation Area to the north, is acceptable.

6.7. I therefore raise no objection to the proposed hoardings on the grounds of public amenity subject to the consent being limited to a period of two years in order not to prejudice the wholesale markets redevelopment.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

6.8. The proposed advert sign would be visible to both vehicular traffic using Digbeth/Smithfield Street/Moat Lane and passengers on the Moor Street – Stratford railway line. The sign would be static, visible from a suitable approach distance and would not interfere with street signage or traffic signal equipment.

6.9. Transportation Development raises no objection subject to a condition requiring the review/improvement of lighting within the car park. I concur with this conclusion and raise no highway safety concerns.

CRIME/FEAR OF CRIME

6.10. There is existing lighting at each floor of the car park, however the proposed advertisement banner would reduce the level of light available within this car park. This could create an unwelcoming environment, particularly during the evenings. West Midlands Police recommend that the lighting is reviewed to ensure that the levels remain as existing and within their ‘Park Mark’ standards.
6.11. Transportation Development has also raised concerns regarding the availability of acceptable lighting levels following implementation of the proposed banner. I therefore recommend a condition requiring the implementation of a suitable scheme of lighting prior to the installation of the proposed advertisement banner.

CCTV

6.12. West Midlands Police also note that the CCTV coverage of the upper-most floor, which is where the majority of suicides/attempts of suicides occur, appears to be incomplete with only partial coverage. I consider that it is reasonable to seek an improvement to the existing CCTV system to ensure that there comprehensive coverage at this location. West Midland Police has confirmed that within the last 12 months there have been 8 incidents or reports of threats/intentions to self-harm in this location.

LENGTH OF CONSENT

6.13. The submission requests that consent is granted for a 2 year period taking into account the City’s aspirations for redeveloping the wholesale markets site, which may include the car park site. I consider that a 2 year-long consent is appropriate in this instance.

7. Conclusion

7.1. The proposed advertisement is in scale with the building to which it would be attached. The amended scheme is in accordance with the SPD’s guideline maximum size for this type of advertisement. Subject to safeguarding conditions requiring improvements to the lighting and CCTV. I therefore recommend temporary approval for a period of two years.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Temporary Approval for two years subject to the following conditions:

1. Limits the intensity of the approved illumination
2. Requires the prior submission of a scheme of lighting
3. Requires the prior submission of improvements to the CCTV system
4. Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
5. Limits the approval to 2 years (advert)

Case Officer: Nicholas Jackson
Fig. 2 View from Digbeth
Location Plan

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