

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2017

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/17/3174297

4 Mill Street, London, W1S 2AX

- 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 Leaserise Ltd against the decision of the Council of the City of Westminster.
 - The application Ref 17/00739/ADV, dated 30 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2017.
 - The advertisement proposed is retention of existing internally illuminated box sign at first-floor level, internally illuminated vertical box sign at ground floor and French wedge fabric awning over entrance door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The advertisement the subject of this appeal was already in place at the time of the application and is referred to in the decision below as "the advertisement."
3. The appellant states that "The signage...has been in place since April 2014. The existing internally illuminated projecting lightbox sign replaced the earlier internally illuminated "Club Sakura" sign...the "Club Sakura" fabric awning above the entrance door was also in place pre-2008...The only new signage is the vertical internally illuminated box sign on the right side of the roadside entrance way."
4. The Council has confirmed that the signage previously displayed "did not have express consent..." and that the proposals the subject of this appeal "have been completed..."
5. The advertisement the subject of this appeal comprises a fixed wedge shaped awning above a door-way; an internally illuminated projecting box sign above the door-way; and an internally illuminated vertical strip sign alongside the door-way.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in this case is the effect of the advertisement on visual amenity, with particular regard to the Mayfair Conservation Area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property, No 4 Mill Street, is a tall mid-terrace brick-built period building located in a short terrace of period properties. The appeal property is
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located within the Mayfair Conservation Area, which in this location is characterised by the presence of period properties within traditional streets.

8. The advertisement relates to a small part of the property, being the area around a ground floor doorway adjacent to No 2 Mill Street, a barber's shop with offices above. Adjoining No 4 to the other side is the Windmill pub.
9. During my site visit, I observed Mill Street to comprise a short but notably attractive street, distinguished by the presence of period features, including attractive traditional fenestration. There are signs relating to the pub adjacent to the appeal property, and to the barber's shop, and these signs appear traditional and in keeping with local character.
10. With the exception of the above signs and the advertisement the subject of this appeal, there is a general absence of projecting advertisements or internally illuminated ones and this enables the attractive period features of Mill Street to appear largely unencumbered by clutter.
11. However, the advertisement relating to this appeal includes a high level, projecting internally illuminated box. This appears entirely out of place in a location where no other such projecting boxes exist. The harm arising from this incongruous feature is exacerbated by its location, whereby it projects from a high level above a door-way, such that the sign draws attention to itself as a boxy feature that detracts from views of the attractive features of the buildings around.
12. The advertisement also includes a tall, vertical, internally illuminated panel sign, alongside the door-way. This appears out of keeping within an area where other signage is more subtle in appearance, being traditional or relating to existing fascia. Furthermore, I find that the size, location, materials and style of the vertical sign afford it a stark and boxy appearance, serving to add to its incongruity. Taken together, the two boxy advertisements and the wedge-shaped awning appear unduly dominant as features at odds with the prevailing character of the area.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) emphasises the importance of safeguarding the nation's heritage assets. In reaching my decision below, I am mindful of the appeal property's location within the Mayfair Conservation Area and that the advertisement would fail to preserve its character and appearance. I find that the advertisement is detrimental to visual amenity. This is contrary to the Framework, to Westminster's City Plan (2016) policies S25 and S28, and to UDP¹ policy DES 8, which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.
14. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR

¹ City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan (2007).