



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 April 2022

By Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/Z/22/3291599

91 High Street, Edgeware HA8 7DB

- 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 Ms Bozena Karbownik, Toomi Ltd against the decision of London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref P/4167/21, dated 15 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2021.
 - The advertisement proposed is Retention of illuminated signage to shop front and projecting signage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within a parade of shops in a largely commercial area on the western side of High Street. It also lies within the Edgeware High Street Conservation Area (CA). The CA is significant for its collection of buildings pre-dating 1900, its association as a surviving part of the original Edgeware village and the significance of the village centres on the old Roman Road of Edgeware High Street road. The Grade II listed buildings within the vicinity of the appeal site, in particular 85, 87 and 89 High Street are some of the oldest surviving buildings of the village, timber framed in construction and are a valuable asset to the village character and appearance that forms an intrinsic part of the CA.
4. The internally illuminated fascia sign with projecting hanging sign has already been erected on site. There is nothing before me to suggest that the signage would have a detrimental effect on public safety.
5. As set out in the Regulations¹, advertisements should be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. Therefore, as the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains, if the locality where an advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, consideration should be given to whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

6. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
7. The fascia is wide as it spans the full width of the shop including a separate shop unit and the side door that is not a customer access into the retail unit, but instead provides access to the independent first floor. This excessive width distorts the proportions of the small single shop front by uncharacteristically incorporating it into what now appears as one wide shop unit.
8. The sign has been designed with the words 'FOOD' projecting above the top of the fascia. This is an uncharacteristic feature of other signage seen along the parade. As the ground floor sits forward of the first floor, and the fascia sign is deep in height, the sign therefore appears more conspicuous due to the stand-off that is created.
9. There is no consistent style of shop front seen within this part of the CA. My attention has been drawn to the Councils Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document 2013 (SPD) acknowledges the variation in shopfront styles and the detrimental effect inappropriate adverts and materials can have on the character and appearance of the CA. Some shop fronts seen here are more traditional in appearance incorporating the use of sympathetic timber material and a traditional style metal hanging sign is also observed. Irrespective of the variations of advertisements, this excessively wide and large use of polycarbonate materiality to the fascia with hanging sign is discordant and visually intrusive and fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
10. In addition, whilst illuminated signage is present within close quarters of the appeal site, this is more representative of external trough lighting that extends above part of the fascia sign, as opposed to internally illuminated LED lighting. The SPD also points to the use of appropriate illumination within this CA. The large extent of internal illumination to the signage is visually obtrusive and detrimentally detracts from the character and appearance of the CA.
11. With reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and proposals affecting heritage assets, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given that the impact of the proposal would be limited to the character and appearance of the CA, I find that the harm would be 'less than substantial' in this instance.
12. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. There are no public benefits identified by the appellant.
13. The appeal site shares a close relationship with the designated heritage assets of adjacent listed buildings. As this is the case, I have had regard to Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. When considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Therefore, the protection of the heritage assets is given considerable importance.

14. The Framework acknowledges the contribution made by the setting. Harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting requires clear and convincing justification.
15. These buildings are experienced within the context of a traditional village character. The signage that is on display here has some degree of harm to their village setting. Whilst the magnitude of harm is limited, nonetheless, there is no convincing justification before me to allow the appeal.
16. Therefore, to conclude on this main issue, the fascia sign by virtue of its continuous projection over two shop fronts, scale, materiality and internal illumination, results in a visually obtrusive and detrimentally harmful form of signage that is out of character with the traditional village character of the CA. It would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA. In addition, it would lead to some limited but harmful impact to the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. To this end the signage would conflict with policies HC1 C of the London Plan (2021), Harrow Core Strategy (2012), and policies DM5 and DM7 of the Development Management Policies Local plan (2013) in their combined aims for development to have regard to character, and to protect heritage assets. Finally, it would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 in its objectives to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR