

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2022

by Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18TH August 2022

Appeal Ref. APP/Y5420/Z/22/3300704

3 The Broadway, Hornsey, London N8 8DU

- 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 BDNS Crouch End against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
 - The application ref. HGY/2022/0773, dated 21 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is "*Proposed new signage to the top of the fascia board. The existing side Fascia's (sic) will remain unchanged. The top Fascia sign backing is DiBond composite aluminium and the letters are Perspex acrylic. Colour is Cool Grey. Light Brown is RAL8003; Dark Brown is RAL8016*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. Under the above Regulations powers to control advertisements are to be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material and any other relevant factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterate this approach.
3. The advertisement display was already in place at the time of the application.

Main issue

4. The Council did not refuse the application on the grounds of public safety. Based on my observations and the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree with that stance.
5. The main issue is therefore the effect of the advertisement display (fascia sign) upon the visual amenity of the site and its surroundings.

Reasons

6. Whilst amenity is not defined exhaustively in the Regulations, they indicate that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any features of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. Paragraph 136 of the Framework explains that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

7. The appeal concerns a ground floor shop. It is part of a 3-storey, late 19th century terraced building on The Broadway which is a primary retail frontage in the town centre of Crouch End. The site falls within the Crouch End Conservation Area (CECA). I therefore have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CECA, insofar as it relates to the consideration of amenity.
8. The CECA Character Appraisal may have not been updated for 10 years or so but it still contains relevant information and the CECA is clearly a designated heritage asset of some significance. It explains that whilst none of the original ground floor shopfronts and surrounds remain intact within the terrace at nos 3-9 The Broadway, the buildings are still considered to make a positive contribution to the streetscape. I saw no reason to disagree. More generally, it notes that some replacement shopfronts detract from the overall quality of their frontages for various reasons, including the use of oversized lettering and signboards on the fascias, and says that signage should have clear simple lettering of an appropriate size and be contained within the fascia.
9. Like most of the other commercial premises hereabouts, being built up to the back of the footway, the appeal property and the fascia sign are prominent within the street scene. They also catch the eye of observers who are coming down Crouch Hill towards the junction with The Broadway.
10. The fascia sign, the subject of the appeal, was fitted to the shopfront previously granted planning permission under ref. HGY/2011/1563. An externally illuminated timber fascia sign was permitted under ref. HGY/2011/1564.
11. The overpainting of the subject fascia sign in a muted (cool grey) colour does not fully disguise its "DiBond" composite aluminium construction. I accept that the sign is to be non-illuminated but like the Council, I found its sleek metallic design and appearance to be rather unsympathetic.
12. It is not the same size as the fascia signs adopted by all former occupiers. For instance, it appears to be about 11 cm higher than the timber one approved under ref. HGY/2011/1564 such that even the surrounds or edges of the fascia board behind are virtually obscured and not obviously expressed. It is not sufficiently contained or set within that fascia board. It appears as an oversized signboard which detracts from the quality of the host building's frontage.
13. The fascia sign's maximum projection of 10 cm from the face of the building (roughly double that of the former approved sign here) is also uncharacteristic of the traditional, well-designed fascia signs in the CECA. Such a projection cannot be classed as minor in this local context where the fascia sign disappointingly and prominently stands out against the more restrained neighbouring fascia signs at no. 1 (Costa) and no. 5 (Treehouse Dental).
14. Whilst there may be examples in the CECA of much larger, brighter and more unsightly advertisements than the one installed at no. 3, no specific examples are offered in the appeal papers and of course it would not be appropriate to follow poor quality examples within a conservation area location like this. The Council says it has recently enforced against such signage at no. 57. The allegation that the Council is adopting an inconsistent approach has not been fully made out. In any event, each case must be assessed on its own merits.
15. In summary, I consider that the fascia sign, by reason of its design, materials, size and projection from the face of the building, detracts from the architectural

qualities of the host building and terrace and fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CECA insofar as it relates to the consideration of amenity. I find on the main issue that the advertisement display (fascia sign) harms the visual amenity of the site and its surroundings in conflict with the Regulations.

16. Although not decisive in themselves, in accordance with the Regulations I have taken into account the policies of the development plan. The scheme is contrary to the most relevant policies of the development plan, those being, in my view, Policy DM3: *Public Realm* and Policy DM8: *Shopfronts, Signs and On-Street Dining* of the Council's Development Management Development Plan Document. In terms of DM3, the subject advertisement does not contribute to an attractive environment and is not of a high quality or sensitive to its visual appearance on the building on which it is sited or to the surrounding street scene, especially in the case of this conservation area. Looking at DM8, again the signage does not contribute to an attractive environment; rather it contributes to a loss of amenity and it adversely impacts the character and appearance of the conservation area. It also matches the negative outcome set out in paragraph 136 of the Framework.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised in the written material before me and the lack of objections from third parties, I have reached the conclusion that the appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR