



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2023

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/N2345/Z/22/3306033

68 Fishergate, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 8BJ

- 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 Mrs Z Patel against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref 06/2022/0790, dated 6 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2022.
 - The advertisement proposed is retrospective advertisement consent to display non illuminated signage to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The applicant in the application form is named only as Patel. The appellant's agent has confirmed that the appeal is proceeding in the name of Mrs Z Patel as stated in the appeal form.
3. The advertisement has already been erected. Accordingly, I have determined the appeal on the basis that retrospective consent is sought for the advertisement that has been implemented.
4. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. This is confirmed by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG). Therefore, while I have taken into account the policies that the Council consider relevant to this appeal, they have not been decisive in my determination of it.
5. The appeal site is located in the Fishergate Hill Conservation Area (the CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity.

Reason

7. The appeal building is a 3 storey mid terrace property on the south side of Fishergate between Stanley Place and Christian Road. It is in a largely residential area within the boundary of Preston City Centre. There is a ground floor commercial premises with associated signage in an adjoining property and Lancashire County Council County Hall is on the opposite side of the road.

8. Fishergate Hill CA covers part of the urban area of Preston. It extends to either side of part of Fishergate Hill to the western side of the train station and the railway line and it includes the imposing County Hall complex and densely developed 19th century terraced dwellings on nearby streets. The significance of the CA derives in part from the harmonious early townscape with its cohesive palette of materials and similar architectural building styles.
9. The advertisement is a black board with a blue and green logo and white lettering. It is roughly 2.7m tall by 1.25m wide and it is elevated about 4m above ground level. It is located between the first floor windows in the principal elevation of the property.
10. The PPG advises that, in assessing amenity, the local planning authority should consider whether the advertisement is in scale and in keeping with locally important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features.
11. As the advertisement is flush with the principal building elevation, it is not prominent in long views along Fishergate. However, by virtue of its scale and elevated position, it is prominent and conspicuous on the closer approach and from the footways on both sides of the road. It will also be readily visible from locations in and around the County Hall complex. The advertisement extends upwards to the level of the second floor windowsills and it is larger than the first floor windows to either side of it. It appears overly large, out of scale and poorly related to the proportions of the building elevation and its fenestration. The overtly contemporary advertisement dominates the appeal building, results in visual clutter and it detracts from the coherent historic character and appearance of the building and the terrace. It fails to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
12. There is signage elsewhere along Fishergate Hill including 3 Fishergate Court. However, the advertisement is markedly out of character with traditional fascia signage and it does not appear directly comparable to signage on upper building elevations, including in terms of its scale, design, siting and relationship to the host building. Advertisements elsewhere, including those that do not provide a visual context for the appeal scheme, do not provide a justification for the advertisement.
13. Therefore, I conclude that the advertisement fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and, accordingly, it harms amenity. Although not determinative in the appeal, the advertisement conflicts with Policy 16 of the Central Lancashire Adopted Core Strategy Local Development Framework Adopted July 2012 and Policy EN8 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Adopted July 2015. These require, among other things, that proposals protect and conserve the character, appearance and significance of heritage assets. It also conflicts with the design and heritage protection aims of the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, the advertisement harms amenity. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester INSPECTOR