



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2023

by S. Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/23/3319282

5 Police Street, Manchester M2 7LQ

- 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 Rockefeller's Jeweller Ltd against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 135928/AO/2023, dated 9 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 23 February 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is described in the application form as 'retention of shop front illuminated signage'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development as set out in the application form it is clear from all I have read that this appeal relates to an illuminated fascia sign only. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.
3. I note that a replacement shopfront has also been installed at the premises but understand that planning permission for the shopfront has been refused by the Council. There is no appeal against that decision before me and my considerations therefore relate only to the advertisement.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the advertisement on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is currently in use as a jeweller's shop. The unit forms part of a much larger building which has a number of floors and three shop units at ground level. The Council identifies the building, which is constructed in a buff coloured brick with decorative architectural details and a regular fenestration pattern, as a non-designated heritage asset. The site is situated in the heart of the city centre within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area and is close to listed buildings including the Grade II listed building, 13-17 King Street. As a result of its size and appearance the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6. From all I have seen and read, prior to alterations taking place, the three shop units were fitted with similar tall frameless glass shopfronts, which sat together under a narrow fascia and below a long projecting cornice. Signage to those frontages was discreet and, in the case of the appeal site, consisted of individual letters applied to the glass. The simplicity of the shopfronts and the subtle signage constituted a sympathetic contemporary alteration to the building that contrasted with and enhanced the more ornate detailing of the façade above.
7. The fascia sign now occupying No 5 is a deep fascia coloured black with individually illuminated lettering in rose gold, reflecting the rose gold of the new shopfront. The depth of the fascia significantly alters the proportions of the shopfront and its relationship with neighbouring units such that they no longer have a harmonious appearance. Moreover, as a result of its position and size, coupled with its dark, flat, shiny appearance, the advertisement fails to respect the subtlety or quality of the materials and architectural detailing of the historic building.
8. The advertisement appears to have been designed in conjunction with the new shopfront. However, given that planning permission has been refused for that shopfront, it can carry little weight in my considerations. If it were seen against the permitted shopfront, and indeed as it is seen against those adjacent to it, the advertisement would appear top-heavy and discordant against the contemporary character and lightweight appearance of the frameless glass.
9. I note that there are wide range of advertisements in the wider area including traditional fascia signs. Nevertheless, these signs are generally better integrated into the architecture of the buildings, have a degree of detailing or are coloured to reflect the buildings on which they sit, and reflect the traditional design and proportions of the shopfronts to which they are related. Accordingly, they do not justify the proposal before me.
10. For the above reasons, the fascia sign fails to respect the character and appearance of the building and, given its prominence within the public realm, detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area.
11. The decision notice refers to policies SP1, CC9, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 which require, amongst other things, that development creates well designed places that enhance or create character, preserves or enhances heritage assets including conservation areas, contributes to the experience of all at street level and is appropriate in terms of its design scale and appearance to the character of the area. I have taken these policies into account as a material consideration.
12. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed as the fascia sign is detrimental to the interests of amenity.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR