
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2024

by Phillip J G Ware BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/23/3332081
30 Stockwell Street SE10 8EY

- 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 The Big Table Group (Ms E Hyder-Smith) against the decision of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref 23/2146/A, dated 29 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of new externally illuminated fascia signage on a curved fascia, two externally illuminated projectig signs, illuminated menu case, cafe barrier banners and umbrellas with branding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the externally illuminated fascia signage on a curved fascia, two externally illuminated projecting signs, illuminated menu case, cafe barrier banners and umbrellas with branding as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Procedural matters

2. The description of the proposal in the refusal notice refers to “externally illuminated fascia sign,,” in the singular. This was taken from the application form. However the submitted plans clearly show two proposed projecting signs, as was referenced in the Council’s report, and I have amended the description accordingly.
3. The signs which have been installed at the property differ somewhat from those on the plans before me – although the principle is very similar. I have dealt with the advertisements as applied for.

Main issue

4. There is one main issue in this case. That is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located at the corner of Stockwell Street and Greenwich High Road. The site contains a largely three storey hotel with a restaurant at ground

- floor level. The fascia and projecting signs face both roads, while the other advertisements are on the Stockwell Street frontage.
6. Various advertisements are already in place and, to judge from submitted photographs, broadly replace those relating to a previous café which occupied the premises.
 7. The site is situated in the West Greenwich Conservation Area and the buffer zone to the World Heritage Site.
 8. The area is characterised by mixed residential and commercial uses, with the main part of the town centre to the north. This central area is characterised by a variety of shops, restaurants, pubs and other services at ground floor level with a mix of office, hotels and residential above. On the opposite side of Stockwell Street is a building occupied by the University of Greenwich.
 9. The most dominant element is the fascia sign, which is white lettering on a black background. The Council says this advertisement is overly detailed and out of keeping with the host building and the area. There is also criticism of the modern style of the lighting. The number of projecting signs are considered excessive by the authority.
 10. I disagree with these conclusions. From my visit to the area I observed a wide range of advertising material – some of a very traditional character (especially closer to the core of the town centre) and others more overtly modern. The fascia is of a subdued colour and contains only a limited amount of advertising material on the fascia itself and on the projecting signs. The method of illumination is far from uncharacteristic in the area.
 11. The building possesses an unusually long frontage wrapping round the corner of two roads, and the amount of advertising material is not excessive. In effect the premises have two shopfronts, one on either road, with a fascia and projecting sign on each. The other elements of the proposal are much more minor and do not impact to any extent on the streetscene or add to any element of clutter at the premises.
 12. I am conscious of the fact that the site is within a Conservation Area and the buffer zone to the World Heritage Site, and of the provision of s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I have accordingly paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any buildings or other land in the conservation area. In this case I conclude that the proposal is neutral in its effect, and that the character and appearance of the area would therefore be preserved.
 13. The Council has drawn my attention to a range of policies they consider to be relevant, and these have been taken into account as material considerations. These deal with delivering good design, heritage assets, the World Heritage Site, shopfronts and signs.¹ In particular the most specific policy dealing with advertisements (DH(e)) provides that illuminated fascias and external lighting should not affect the character of the building. My attention has been drawn to the Council's recently adopted Urban Design Guidance SPD. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the

¹ Policies DH1, DH3, DH4, DH(e), DH(h), and TC4 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014), Policies D3, HC1 and HC2 of the London Plan (2021)

interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. In the determination of this appeal, the policies and guidance (although material) have not been decisive.

14. A separate matter related to public safety concerns the umbrella signs and barrier on the Stockwell Street frontage. The barriers mark the seating area associated with the restaurant, with umbrellas providing shelter. These were in place at the time of my visit, although there were no tables outside due to the weather. However, as shown on the appeal plans, a wide area of walkway would remain, and the restaurant area does not impede the safe flow of pedestrians on the separate footway. The proposal does not conflict with the relevant policies cited by the Council in the reason for refusal which relate to walking and street safety.²

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement would not be detrimental to the interests of amenity or public safety.

P. J. G. Ware

Inspector

² Policy IM(b) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) and Policy T2 of the London Plan (2021)