



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2024

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/Z/24/3344961

Nationwide Building Society, 304-306 Chiswick High Road, London W4 1NP

- 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 Nationwide Building Society against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Reference is 00248/304-306/AD17.
 - The proposal is to display an internally illuminated front fascia sign, internally illuminated projecting sign, internally illuminated branded ATM surround panel, branded text window sticker and three branded window notices.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for an internally illuminated front fascia sign, internally illuminated projecting sign, internally illuminated branded ATM surround panel, branded text window sticker and three branded window notices. The consent is for ten years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations as well as the following conditions:
 1. The internal illumination intensity of the front fascia and projecting signs hereby approved shall not exceed 300 candelas per square metre (as measured from any part of the sign).
 2. The front fascia and projecting signs hereby approved shall not include moving or video features, intermittent flashing light sources or exposed cold cathode tubing and shall be permanently retained as such.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application plans included pigeon spikes which the Council considered to be visually unacceptable. Plans lodged with the appeal have removed these. I do not see any prejudice to any party in my considering these revised plans and removing reference to spikes within the description. I am therefore determining this appeal on the basis of the following drawings: Fascia Statutory Signage - A; Fascia Statutory Signage - B; PP-12740899v1; PL.00; PR.00.E1 (Rev B); EX.00.E1 & Lighting Assessment.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on amenity of the area.
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Reasons

4. The Council's Decision Notice refers to development plan policies. The Regulations require that decisions be made only in interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, development plan policies alone cannot be decisive, but I have taken them into account as a material consideration. In this instance the Council raises no concerns with regard to public safety.

Amenity

5. The appeal property is a sizeable ground floor unit which has a modern plate glass and illuminated signed frontage below two additional traditional floors. It lies on a tree fronted part of the main road within the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area (CA).
6. The planned signage is effectively a 'branding' exercise and very much reflects in size, position, illumination and form the existing displays.
7. Notwithstanding the existing situation the Council is concerned about the internal illumination and makes the case that given the CA location and the need to protect amenity any illumination should be external and not internal.
8. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
9. Whilst I fully appreciate the Council's wishes, and indeed policies, to 'normally' secure external illumination only in CAs I am of the opinion that this would not need to the case here. I say that for four reasons. Firstly, because the site is at a part of the of the CA which has a very different context and proposition from some of the CA's more intimate and small-scale stretches. Secondly, the signs themselves have a degree of subtlety about them. Thirdly, trees to the front are the dominant visual feature here. Finally, because the signage is almost a direct replacement for what presently exists.
10. On the final point, the existing display was permitted post CA designation and post the policies and guidance cited by the Council. It follows therefore that this replacement of like for like will *preserve* the character and appearance of the CA. As per the Council's CA analysis, the building will continue to be a 'positive contributor' to the CA.
11. On the matter of pigeon spikes I am satisfied that their substitution by visually benign 'bird wires' would be appropriate in amenity terms.
12. I conclude that there would not be harm to the host or surrounding properties or detriment to the visual amenity of the locality or the Primary Shopping Frontage and that the character and appearance of the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area would be preserved.

Conditions

13. I would consider ten years to be a reasonable display period for the consent bearing in mind the question of amenity, the seemingly established context,

and the degree of investment needed. The Council endorses the standard conditions and I would agree with the authority that illumination levels and static format should be controlled for reasons of amenity. The matter of potential blocking of the public realm during construction or maintenance need not in my opinion be covered by a condition given the modest nature of the proposal and existence of other legislation and controls.

Overall conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would not be unduly detrimental to the amenity of the area. Accordingly, I shall allow the appeal.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR