



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M4510/Z/24/3353500

36-44 Northumberland Street, Newcastle NE1 7DE

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by London Lites Ltd against the decision of Newcastle City Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/1073/01/ADV.
 - The advertisements proposed are 2 LED Digital Advertisement Displays.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The Regulations make clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, while I have had regard to the policies and guidance referred to by the parties, these have not been decisive in my assessment. The recent revision to the National Planning Policy Framework does not affect the matters relevant to this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The Council raises no objection on safety grounds, and I have no reason to take a different view. Thus, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on amenity, including the setting of a nearby listed building.

Reasons

4. Northumberland Street is a vibrant pedestrianised shopping street lined by buildings of different age, size, and appearance. While there are a great variety of advertisements along the street, the signage above ground floor level is limited and mostly comprises of a broadly consistent design language of slim vertical projecting signs with a restrained appearance. Some of the modern buildings have large glazing to the upper floors which allows for additional shop displays, but this is internal to the building and is not generally noticeable in wider views along the street.
5. The appeal site is a large three-storey building at a prominent corner position, with frontages onto Northumberland Street and Saville Row. The ground floor typically contains a number of shopfronts, each with their own external treatment and signage. However, apart from a projecting sign, the upper section is largely free of advertisements and has a consistent rise and fall pattern of vertical projecting bays between the narrow windows which adds a pleasing sense of rhythmic articulation and interest to the building.

6. On the opposite side of Northumberland Street is a Grade II listed building, No 45. The listed building features a renewed ground floor shop front, but the floors above are of high architectural and historic significance with rich details including named life size figures of Sir John Marley, Roger Thornton, Thomas Bewick, and Harry Hotspur. Its presence in the townscape is heightened by its position at the intersection with Saville Row where it is a focal point at the end of the street. The appeal site is seen closely with the listed building in both directions along Northumberland Street and particularly from Saville Row where it directly frames the listed building on one side.
7. The proposed advertising screens would wrap around the northern corner of the building at first and second floor level, fully covering two of the bays on each elevation. In this position, and at more than half the overall height of the building, the screens would be very prominent and sizeable additions, both individually and cumulatively, appearing as a harmful interjection to the rise and fall pattern that forms an essential part of the building's design and character. The digital illumination and sequential changing images would accentuate their prominence, particularly at night. They would be unlike any other signage currently found on the building and would add unnecessary clutter to the upper facades.
8. Consequently, the proposed advertising screens would not respect or integrate satisfactorily with the design and character of the host building and the street scene more widely, notwithstanding the strong commercial character of the area. For the same reasons, they would also draw attention away and detract from the interest and importance of the nearby listed building that they would be seen directly in context with. I consider that even just a single screen in this location would be harmful in these regards.
9. The appellant refers to other existing digital display screens elsewhere along Northumberland Street. However, I consider these to be materially different on account of being free standing units of various sizes and design, the largest of which is some distance from the appeal site. Nothing that I have seen or read persuades me that their presence mitigates the harm that would be caused by the proposal before me.
10. I therefore conclude that the digital advertising screens would be detrimental to the interests of amenity, including the setting of the nearby listed building.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has highlighted the environmental performance of the screens and various benefits that the advertisements may bring. However, these matters do not weigh in favour of the proposal as advertisement decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR