



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2025

by **A Veevers BA(Hons) PGDip(BCon) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/24/3342179

Goldsmiths (Previously Ernest Jones), 15-19 St Ann Street, Manchester M2 7LG

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Natasha Snowling of Goldsmiths against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 138592/AO/2023.
 - The advertisement proposed is signage to canopy valances and internally illuminated individual letters to existing fascia.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and advertisement consent is granted for signage to canopy valances and internally illuminated individual letters to existing fascia at Goldsmiths (Previously Ernest Jones), 15-19 St Ann Street, Manchester M2 7LG in accordance with the terms of application ref: 138592/AO/2023. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and the following additional conditions:
 - 1) The intensity of the illumination of the fascia sign permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 candelas per square metre and the illumination shall be static.
 - 2) The fascia sign permitted by this consent shall only be illuminated during the opening hours of the premises to which it relates.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address of the appeal site provided on the application form did not include a street number and the address given on the appeal form differs from that on the Council's decision notice. Clarification was sought from the appellant who has confirmed that the correct address is that in the banner heading above, which matches that indicated on the red edge plan.
3. The name of the appellant in the banner heading above has been taken from the application form, which is different to the name given on the appeal form. However, the appellant has clarified that the correct name is that used on the application form. I have therefore proceeded on this basis. I have also used the description of development as set out in the Council's decision notice in the banner heading, and in my formal decision above, omitting words that are not an act of development, as this more accurately and succinctly describes the proposal than that on the application form.

4. The original application sought advertisement consent for the display of canopy signage at the appeal site as well as internally illuminated individual letters on the building's fascia. The Council issued a split decision, wherein only the illuminated fascia signage was refused consent. The appeal is solely concerned with this aspect of the proposal.
5. The illuminated fascia sign has already been installed. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on the basis that the development has already occurred, and with regard to the plans submitted with the application.
6. The Regulations set out that powers shall be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. I have also had regard to the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which was published in February 2025.

Main Issue

7. The Council indicate that there are no concerns in relation to the fascia sign with regard to public safety and, from the evidence before me and observations at my site visit, I have no reason to disagree. The main issue is therefore the effect of the illuminated fascia sign on visual amenity.

Reasons

8. The building on which the fascia sign has been installed is a four storey building located at the corner of St Ann Street and St Ann's Square, a busy, historic commercial area of the city centre. The appeal relates to a ground floor commercial unit occupied by Goldsmiths jewellers. The building lies within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area (SACA) and is adjacent to the Parsonage Road Conservation Area (PRCA).
9. Furthermore, while the appeal building itself is not listed, St Anns Church, a Grade I Listed Building, sits on the opposite side of St Ann Street. Several other listed buildings are located in proximity to the appeal building, notably, Grade II* Listed, 25 St Ann Street and Grade II Listed, 17 to 23 and 16,18, 20 and 22 St Ann's Square.
10. As set out in the Regulations, factors relevant to visual amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. Therefore, as the Planning Practice Guidance explains, if the locality where an advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, consideration should be given to whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.
11. The SACA is relatively large and incorporates the important historic commercial core of the city, centred around the early Georgian St Ann's Church and the former cotton exchange building, now the Royal Exchange. Much of the SACA is pedestrianised and includes several historic and architecturally imposing buildings that accommodate fashionable shopping premises.
12. The PRCA is of similar size to the SACA and is located on the northern edge of the city's core, adjacent to the River Irwell and centred around Parsonage Gardens. It includes many historic tall and architecturally designed buildings that sit either side of narrow roads, interspersed with more modern buildings. Insofar as

is relevant to this appeal, from my observations on site, the significance of both the SACA and the PRCA derives from the architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings which contribute to the city's historic townscape.

13. St Ann's Church is relatively small in comparison to the tall buildings that surround it, but its fabric is clearly much older than those buildings. The two-storey, six bay nave church has a four-stage square tower. From my own observations and the List descriptions that have been provided, the significance of St Ann's Church essentially derives from its stone ashlar early Georgian construction, restored between 1886 and 1891 by Alfred Waterhouse.
14. The building at 25 St Ann Street lies on the opposite corner of St Ann's Square to the appeal building. It is an imposing sandstone building with a chamfered corner, rusticated quoins and an attached red brick and sandstone former bank manager's house. The adjacent 17 to 23 St Ann's Square, known as Mansfield Chambers, is a late 19th Century stucco on brick building with ground floor shop and offices above constructed in the decorative Italianate style. The four-storey terraced block at 16 to 22 St Ann's Square form a group of former town houses, now shops on the ground floors, and were generally remodelled in the early 19th Century. All have tall 12-paned sash windows on upper floors with moulded frieze or cornice details on the front elevations. The significance of these listed buildings is largely derived from their age, materials and architectural details.
15. The appeal building's complementary height, proportions, age and architectural detailing on the elevation facing towards St Ann Street make a wholly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the SACA. The building also contributes in a positive way to the significance and thus the settings of the adjacent PRCA and the surrounding listed buildings due to its age, traditional material and architectural form.
16. There is no consistent style of commercial frontage seen within this part of the SACA, or the adjacent PRCA as each building is individually designed. Given the prevalence of historic buildings in the area, business signage generally respects the quality of materials and architectural detailing on the host building and is not overly prominent or discordant.
17. In terms of the appeal building, the fascia sign is already in situ. It replaced a previous sign in a similar position that also comprised of illuminated individual letters. The signage comprises of 300mm high individual acrylic lettering spelling the name of the premises to which it relates. The letters are mounted on the existing background fascia, which is positioned above an entrance to the shop unit. The outer face of the letters is black and the letters are individually internally lit with halo lighting. The application form states the level of illumination is 300 candelas per square metre.
18. The sign is positioned between decorative pilasters that are located between the ground and first floor of the building. As these project from the fascia of the building, despite the dark colour of the lettering, the signage appears recessive. Due to the position of the fascia sign, the proportions of the shop front and the harmonious rhythm of the building is maintained.
19. While the individual letters are of a more contemporary font and slightly taller and of darker colour than those on the previous fascia sign, they are no taller than some of the letters on other fascia signage on the building. The use of a capital

letter font complements that used elsewhere on the appeal property frontage in the wording 'Breitling' and 'Omega' and due to the size and spacing of the lettering the dark colour appears of muted tone against the existing, beige-coloured background fascia.

20. I note the Council's concerns regarding illumination due to the depth of the halo lighting to each letter, which is not insubstantial. However, the position of the sign between projecting moulded stone features ensures illumination is not a prominent feature when seen in the context of the overall length of the building's frontage and does not appear incongruous. In any event, the sign would only be illuminated during the times the associated business would be open during hours of darkness.
21. Overall, I find the fascia sign is sensitively designed to complement the architectural quality of the building and respect the traditional character of the SACA. Despite its illumination, it is not overly prominent or visually harmful when viewed along St Ann Street.
22. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. This statutory duty applies in advertisement appeals in so far as it relates to the consideration of amenity. The setting of listed buildings is in this case a relevant material consideration in terms of the appearance of the advertisements and consideration of amenity, but the statutory duty related thereto is not engaged.
23. With this and the above in mind, the signage taken as a whole is acceptable in visual amenity terms and complies with the Regulations. By association and for the same reasons, the appeal scheme preserves the character and appearance of the SACA and does not unacceptably impinge on the setting and therefore the significance of the nearby PRCA or listed buildings.
24. The Council has referred in its decision notice to Policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2012) and saved Policy DC14 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995). Whilst not decisive I have had regard to the policies as material considerations noting particularly the need to preserve or enhance heritage assets and the general design criteria for new advertisements.

Conditions

25. The Council's questionnaire confirms that the standard conditions should be placed on the consent as set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. As the lettering is illuminated, and given the site's location within the SACA, it would be necessary to apply a condition to limit the luminance level and the hours thereof. A condition requiring the advertisements be carried out in accordance with the submitted plans would not be necessary as express consent is granted only for the advertisement as applied for.

Conclusion

26. For the above reasons, I conclude that the illuminated fascia sign is acceptable in terms of its impact on visual amenity and as such the appeal is allowed.

A Veevers INSPECTOR