



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 June 2025

by **H Marriott MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/H/25/3361648

52 Earls Street, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2AD

- 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 Mr Aras Hussain against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/1133/ADV.
 - The advertisements proposed are for a fascia advert (not illuminated) and an illuminated sign within window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. There are two appeals on this site. This decision relates to the refusal of advertisement consent for the display of adverts. The other is against the refusal of planning permission for alterations to the front elevation of the building including the installation of a roller shutter and external box¹. Since the descriptions differ and each requires consideration under separate legislation, I have dealt with each appeal in two separate decisions.
3. The application form states that the adverts are already in place on site. I also observed this for myself during my site visit.
4. The Council has drawn my attention to development plan policies it considers to be relevant. Section 3(1) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) limits my considerations to those relating to amenity and public safety. Accordingly, whilst I have had regard to them as a material consideration, the policies cited by the Council have not, by themselves, been decisive.
5. Section 3(2) of the Regulations defines factors relevant to amenity to include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. The site is located in the Thetford Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This statutory duty applies in advertisement appeals insofar as it relates to the consideration of amenity.

¹ Appeal ref: APP/F2605/W/25/3361651

6. The Council do not have concerns regarding public safety, and I have no reason to disagree. Whilst the Council's third reason for refusal in its decision refers to the effect of the adverts on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, my assessment focuses on the effect of the adverts on amenity with specific regard to the CA.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the adverts on amenity with specific regard to the Thetford Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

8. The CA designation encapsulates Thetford town centre and the roads radiating out from it. It also encompasses Thetford Priory and a number of open spaces including Castle Meadow and park. The Thetford Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2024) (the Appraisal) confirms that the special interest of the CA is derived from its buildings, which reflect the town's ecclesiastical prominence during the tenth and eleventh century onwards, the industries which developed and subsequent development. Significance is also derived from the variety of materials within building facades which include brick, chalk and medieval stone from former monastery buildings as well as flint. Consequently, the age and quality of its architecture and the use of traditional materials are among the important components that contribute to the significance and special interest of the CA as a whole.
9. The appeal site, 52 Earls Street (No 52) is a mid-terrace property containing a shop with a recessed doorway at ground floor level and residential accommodation above. The terrace has a distinctive steeply pitched roof with a three-storey gable feature, various bay windows, arched doorways and decorative red brick detailing on its façade and is a focal point at the junction of Earls Street and Norwich Road. The drawing of the elevation prior to works, illustrates that No 52 previously benefitted from a traditional shopfront design with a modest sized fascia sign (the historic shopfront). The character of this part of the CA is in part formed by the architectural quality and relationship of the terrace with the street and it therefore contributes positively to the significance of the CA.
10. The front elevation of No 52, and the adverts subject of this appeal, are highly visible in views from the street and from neighbouring windows. The printed vinyl fascia sign is overly large, and extends above the height of the shopfront, projecting forward of and obscuring the bottom part of the window serving residential accommodation in the first floor above. Whilst not illuminated, it has a glossy finish which contrasts with the traditional materials used on the front elevation of the terrace. The illuminated sign in the shop window, adds to the contemporary appearance of the signage, which in combination create eye catching and uncharacteristic additions to the historic shopfront. This does not contribute towards the creation of a high-quality shopfront appropriately designed for the age of the terrace in which it is located. Overall, the adverts fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
11. The fascia sign only overlaps a small part of the lower section of the upper floor window and is not illuminated. The illuminated sign within the window is located below the shutter box. Therefore, a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regards to outlook and light does not result.

12. The appellant has drawn my attention to similar adverts in the area including at 10B Bridge Street, 25 King Street and 44 King Street. Adverts on other buildings do not justify the adverts subject of this appeal, which for the reasons set out are harmful to amenity including the character and appearance of the CA. Indeed, signage in shopfronts is highlighted as a key issue which threatens the special historic and architectural interest of the CA as set out in the Appraisal, and do not justify the appeal proposal.
13. I conclude that the adverts have a harmful effect on amenity including the character and appearance of the CA. I have taken into account Policies GEN 02, COM 01, COM 03 and ENV 07 of the Breckland Local Plan (2023) which require the use of high-quality details and materials that respect or improve local character, aim to protect amenity and to ensure that the significance of designated heritage assets are conserved or wherever possible enhanced. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies. There is also conflict with the paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when adverts are poorly sited and designed.

Other Matter

14. The appeal site is located within the setting of Numbers 3, 5 and 7 Norwich Road, a Grade II Listed early 19th century terrace with a pebble and cut flint façade with gault brick, and pan tiled roof. In considering whether to grant planning permission, I have been mindful of my statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Act to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. The potential for the adverts to impact on this heritage asset has not been raised by the main parties. Having considered the relationship between the appeal site and this asset, I am satisfied that no harm to significance would arise. Even so, this does not alter the harm I have identified in relation to amenity and the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Marriott

INSPECTOR