
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 June 2025

by **S Hunt BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2025

Appeal A: APP/C2741/H/25/3362686

Keystones, 4 Monkgate, York YO31 7PE

- 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 Social Pub and Kitchen against the decision of City of York Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01957/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is display of 2no. pictorial signs to existing hanging gibbets, halo illuminated lettering, door plaque, external display board, window vinyl, and menu board.
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Appeal B: APP/C2741/Y/25/3362687

Keystones, 4 Monkgate, York YO31 7PE

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Social Pub and Kitchen against the decision of City of York Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01958/LBC.
 - The works proposed are external alterations to include 2no. pictorial signs to existing hanging gibbets, halo illuminated lettering, door plaque, external display board, window vinyl, and menu board.
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Decision

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are both dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I saw on my site visit that the proposal has been carried out. I have no reason to believe that the signage dimensions, lighting and materials differ from those detailed on the submitted plans and I have dealt with the appeals on this basis.
3. The appeals relate to the same scheme under different legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning given that they are related to the same building and have common issues. The appeal property is a listed building, is adjacent to other listed buildings and a scheduled monument, and is located within a conservation area (CA). I am therefore mindful of sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

4. The City of York Local Plan was adopted very shortly after the decisions were made on the applications (February 2025). The policies remain unchanged from those quoted in the reasons for refusal.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether the proposal preserves the significance of the Grade II listed building, 4 Monkgate (ref. 1257238), the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, and whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Central Historic Core CA. Specifically in terms of Appeal A is the effect of the advertisements on visual amenity.

Reasons

6. 4 Monkgate 'Keystones' is a handsome three storey, symmetrical, detached public house dating from the late 18th century. It is prominently situated on the junction of Monkgate with St Maurice's Road and Lord Mayor's Walk, neighbouring a number of Grade II listed buildings (including no's 1 and 3, and 2 Monkgate, and 1 Lord Mayors Walk). It lies just outside of the City Walls and Monk Bar (Grade I listed and a scheduled monument).
7. The York Central Historic Core CA is extensive, and is divided into a number of distinct character areas. The appeal site lies within area 10 (the Medieval Streets) and immediately abuts area 7 (Monkgate). The character of the CA derives from the survival of the medieval street network within the city walls reinforced by 18th and 19th century development when fine Georgian buildings including the host building were developed. Monk Bar provides a recognisable landmark, and focal point, on entry to the historic core of the city.
8. The host building forms a key part of the sensitive views into the historic core, in the immediate setting of Monk Bar. The special interest of the building is as a fine example of a standalone Georgian building in a prominent location. It makes a positive contribution to both the character and appearance of the CA and to the setting of the neighbouring heritage assets.
9. I note that signage was in place previously, albeit less prolific and of a differing design. Some form of signage is necessary in advertising the use of the building as a public house. The surroundings are primarily commercial and there is signage on most of the nearby buildings, together with some visual clutter associated with the crossroads signage and traffic signals. I noted that the nearby commercial signage is largely confined to painted timber shopfronts and non-illuminated hanging signs which are small in scale and number.
10. The proposed signage is prolific and, for the most part, unsympathetic in its design and use of materials. In particular the illumination of the lettering above the door and to the two hanging signs represents an incongruous and unnecessary addition to the proposals. The signage results in disproportionate, incongruous interventions in this historic context and results in harm to the significance of the listed building, the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, and both the character and appearance of the CA.
11. For the reasons outlined above, I find that the signage fails to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the significance of the CA. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the NPPF) advises that when

considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed through the alteration of those assets or development within its setting, and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. Given the scale of the alterations I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance, albeit I agree with the Council that the harm is at a higher level due to the significance of the building and its prominent setting within the CA. Nevertheless, I give this harm considerable importance and weight.

12. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the NPPF advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viability use of the building. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposals support the long-term vitality and viability of the public house as a business, and that the five-yearly refurbishment of the building is vital to ensuring its continuing viable use in a highly competitive market and challenging economic circumstances. Also, the previous signage and colour scheme is said to not reflect current market trends.
13. Whilst I acknowledge that the public house use of the building means it may require regular refurbishment and that the market is competitive, there is a lack of evidence before me that the change in design of the signage, and additional (illuminated) signage, would achieve these aims to an extent that they would represent public benefits which are sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
14. Given the above and in the absence of any significant and substantiated public benefits, I find that the proposal fails to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed host building, the setting of the neighbouring Grade I and Grade II listed buildings, and the character or appearance of the CA. This fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 210 of the NPPF. It conflicts with the aims of policies D4, D5 and D13 of the York Local Plan which seeks to ensure heritage assets are preserved or enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, and that advertisements are of a scale, design, material, finish, position and number that will not cause harm to the character of the host building, and will respect the character and appearance of the street scene.
15. I would agree with the Council that the advertisements do not adversely affect public safety. In terms of visual amenity, Regulation 3(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out that relevant factors include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, or cultural interest. In accordance with Regulation 3(1), I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan and other relevant factors. It follows from my conclusions above on heritage assets that the proposal is also detrimental to the interests of amenity. The proposal also conflicts with NPPF paragraph 141 which sets out that poorly sited and designed advertisements can have a negative impact on the quality and character of places.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above the appeals should be dismissed.

S Hunt

INSPECTOR