
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2025

by **L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/Z/24/3355403

124-126 The Cut, London, SE1 8LN

- 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 Infinity Outdoor against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref is 24/02144/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is a temporary open weave banner mesh advert situated upon a fully working access scaffold. The temporary scaffold upon the host building will be installed to allow completion of the approved redevelopment of the site. We propose to cover the scaffold with a shroud showing a 1-1 image of the host building behind the scaffold. A section of the shroud will from time to time show commercial adverts. When a commercial advert is not in situation the scaffold will revert to being dressed in a 1-1 montage image of the host building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated in December 2024, during the consideration of this appeal. Insofar as is directly relevant to the appeal, there are no substantive changes and no parties have been prejudiced as a result.
3. As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, advertisements should be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. The Council has drawn to my attention the policies it considers relevant and I have taken them into account as a material consideration though they have not, by themselves, been decisive in reaching my determination on this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The previous building which occupied the appeal site, 124-126 The Cut, was demolished ahead of the commencement of works for the construction of a five-

storey building¹. At the time of my site visit works appeared to have commenced. The site is a corner plot situated at the junction of The Cut and Cornwall Road.

6. The appeal site is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings, most notably, for the purposes of this appeal, the Old Vic Theatre² and the Royal National Theatre Studio³ (RNTS). The Framework defines the significance of a heritage asset as the value of the asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The Framework goes on to state that the interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic and also identifies that the significance of an asset derives not only from that asset's physical presence but also from its setting.
7. The Old Vic Theatre is situated next to the RNTS with Webber Street running between the two buildings. The Theatre is a Grade II* listed building dating from around 1816-1818 and is one of the oldest surviving theatres in England. The Theatre has architectural and historical significance but, in relation to this appeal, the key significance is in relation to the architectural quality and rarity of the building, the historical significance of the building as one of the oldest theatres to survive in England, and its relationship, and group value, with the RNTS.
8. The Royal National Theatre Studio is a Grade II listed building which is situated on the opposite side of The Cut, almost immediately opposite, to the appeal site. The RNTS was formerly theatre scenery workshops, wardrobe stores and offices to the Old Vic Theatre and derives significance from its relationship with the theatre. Additionally, the RNTS is considered one of the earliest examples of New Brutalism and is one of the only architect-designed theatre workshops built in Britain.
9. When viewing the appeal site, and the heritage assets, the large scale buildings within the City of London can be seen in the background. The area surrounding the site is also commercial in nature with a number of shops and restaurants present. Nevertheless, the advertisements and signage within the area are generally relatively discreet and of a small scale with a limited zone of impact. In the immediate vicinity of the appeal site the Old Vic Theatre has several advertisements which serve to draw the eye and denote its status and use.
10. Broadly speaking, the area immediately surrounding the appeal site has a more reserved and less busy character and appearance than the surrounding areas. Spaces between buildings are larger and the area forms a noticeably less busy pocket between the city behind and the nearby vibrant commercial properties. In this context the two aforementioned listed buildings are the primary visual landmarks which attract the attention of those visiting the area. This setting allows those experiencing the heritage assets to appreciate the importance of, and architectural qualities of, the listed buildings and makes a positive contribution to the special interest and significance of the heritage assets.
11. The proposal is for the installation of a shroud wrap attached to a scaffold for the temporary period of 12 months whilst the development of the building is undertaken. The shroud would display a 1:1 image of the forthcoming building under construction. Within that image would be an inset advertisement measuring

¹ Planning Ref 16/05063/FUL

² National Heritage List for England Entry Number: 1068710

³ National Heritage List for England Entry Number: 1391540

around 10.8m x 6.3m, positioned in a landscape format on the south side of the building facing The Cut. The advertisement would be illuminated by floodlighting between dusk and 11pm.

12. The Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) further explains that 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.
13. In my view, the shroud with an image of the proposed building would not in itself cause harm, given that the building which would be depicted has been granted permission, and would likely be more visually attractive than bare scaffolding or a blank shroud. However, the proposed advertisement at around 10.8m by 6.3m would be considerable in terms of size. Though it would cover only a proportion of the shroud as a whole, it would extend across almost the entire width of the south elevation covering around a third of its height. Furthermore, the advertisement would be positioned some 3m above ground level. Whilst illuminated the advertisement would be more prominent still.
14. I accept that from a number of viewpoints, particularly those from vantage points slightly further afield, the proposal would be screened, or partially screened, from view. This however, does not mitigate the effect that the proposal would have from those areas where it is clearly visible. Though it would be situated on the opposite side of the road, the proposed advertisement would be sited fairly centrally between the Old Vic Theatre and the RNTS. In many experiences of the listed buildings, therefore, the proposed advertisement would draw attention away from the heritage assets and distract from the appreciation of the heritage assets and the inter-relationship between the buildings.
15. Consequently, the advertisement would appear as a visually dominant feature within the area and its obtrusive presence would be accentuated by the nature of this location and, particularly, the lack of other large scale advertisements within the area. As such, the proposal would detract from the ascendancy of the listed buildings, particularly the Old Vic Theatre and would visually compete with the dominant buildings within the area. The proposal would, therefore, cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and would fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II* listed Old Vic Theatre and the Grade II listed Royal National Theatre Studio.
16. I have taken into account that the shroud, and the advertisement, would be temporary, only present for the duration of the building works, estimated to be around 12 months. This limits the harm that the advertisement would cause. I also recognise that the PPG accepts that buildings which are being renovated or are undergoing major structural work and which have scaffolding or netting around them may be considered suitable as temporary sites for shroud advertisements. Nevertheless, the Framework is clear that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. In this case, as the proposal would affect the settings of several listed buildings that weight is significant.
17. I recognise that the proposed advertisement would be in place to offset the cost of printing the images of the proposed building on the shroud and note that without this funding a shroud of a lesser quality is likely to be installed. However, the harm

to the amenity of the area as a result of the size, scale and location of the advertisement would be such that the benefit associated with the higher quality shroud would be lost.

18. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material. Of particular relevance to the appeal proposal are Policies Q17 and Q20 of the Lambeth Local Plan 2020 – 2035, adopted September 2021 (LP). LP Policy Q17 states that no advertisement shall harm amenity and specifically sets out that the Council will support proposals for advertisement panels where they do not diminish the setting or significance of heritage assets. Policy Q20 sets out that development affecting listed buildings will be supported where it would not harm the setting. As I have found that the proposal would harm amenity, it would conflict with these policies.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons set out above and taking all other matters raised into account, the appeal is dismissed.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR