



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22nd July 2025

by **Simon J Cater MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/Z/25/3366536

169-171 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3JB

- 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 Astro Property Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref is 25/0797.
 - The advertisement proposed is for the display of 1 No. Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign visible from Front & Side Elevations & 2 No. Projecting Signs.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The advertisements have been completed and generally accord with the submitted plans.
3. The Council has drawn my attention to the policies it considers to be relevant to this appeal, and I have taken them into account as a material consideration where relevant. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reiterate this approach.
4. Neither the Highway Authority, nor the Council, has raised an objection to the proposal in public safety terms, and I have no reason to disagree with this view.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the appeal site and surrounding area including the effect on the Mapesbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site occupies a prominent corner position at 169–171 Cricklewood Broadway, at the junction with Chichele Road (A407). It comprises a four-storey building with commercial use at ground floor level and lies within Cricklewood Town Centre, in an area of primary shopping frontage. The advertisements are installed on a highly visible flank wall facing both streets.

7. The host building is an Edwardian property, it features original architectural detailing including stucco pilasters, red brick surrounds, timber sash windows, and a curved corner with decorative strapwork and lion mask motifs. The parapet rises to a fourth floor with gabled dormers, contributing to its architectural interest and prominence within the Mapesbury Conservation Area.
8. The appeal site occupies a prominent position at the junction with the parade of properties at 173–191 Cricklewood Broadway. While the appeal site itself lies within the designated conservation area, the adjoining parade falls outside its boundary. This contrast in designation heightens the sensitivity of the appeal site to any visual change, particularly in relation to its immediate context.
9. From my site visit, it was evident that the installed advertisements, owing to their scale and positioning, present as unduly dominant and visually intrusive features. They interrupt the cohesive Edwardian character and subdued visual quality that define the conservation area, introducing a conspicuous commercial element that is incompatible with the established architectural and environmental context. I note the Council's concerns regarding the potential of illumination to further exacerbate the visual impact, particularly during darker hours.
10. The Council's Planning officer report identifies material harm to visual amenity arising from the advertisements excessive scale and illuminated nature. The surrounding context is characterised by modest signage and a restrained visual tone. From my site visit, I agree with this assessment. The advertisements appear incongruous and detracts from both the host building's architectural qualities and the character of the locality.
11. The Mapesbury Conservation Area is defined by its architectural consistency and landscaped setting. The advertisements fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, or its setting, instead introducing visual clutter and drawing attention away from its heritage value and the contribution this makes to the amenity of the area.
12. The Shopfront Supplementary Planning Document advises that projecting signs should not be used in conservation areas and fascia signage design should appear uncluttered, with the text taking up only a modest part of the fascia and generally covering no more than half the width and half the height of the fascia. The proposal conflicts with this guidance, even though the appeal building is a former bank and technically it does not have a 'shopfront'.
13. While the appellant contends that similar advertisements exist elsewhere, the appeal site lies within a Conservation Area designated to protect its special architectural and historic qualities, which is a material consideration. The advertisements are prominently visible within the conservation area and undermine its character and appearance. The existence of other advertisements in different contexts does not justify introducing further harm in this sensitive location.
14. The harm would be less than substantial, on account of the fact that the proposal would only affect part of the character of the Conservation Area and would not alter the built form or the townscape. Nevertheless, taking account of the statutory duty to have special regard to enhancing or preserving the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, importance and weight must be attached to the harm identified. No public benefit has been identified which would outweigh the harm that would be caused by the proposal.

15. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area and would not meet with the objectives of the Framework. I have also taken into account Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Policy BHC1 of the Brent Local Plan 2019-2041 (2022) which seek to protect amenity, amongst other things, so they are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Conclusion

16. The appeal is dismissed.

Simon J Cater

INSPECTOR