



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/Z/25/3368471

Rhythms, 1A Waterloo Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8AY

- 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 Peter Wormald against the decision of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00181/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign at Rhythms, 1A Waterloo Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8AY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00181/ADV. 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 2007 Regulations and the following additional condition:
 - 1) The proposed internally illuminated fascia sign hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Front Elevation received by the local planning authority on 28 February 2025, and the Site Plan, received by the local planning authority on 14 February 2025.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the Council's description of the advertisement in the above banner heading as it accurately and concisely describes the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area (CA). In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
5. The CA is largely commercial in character and includes the historic core of Epsom and most of its oldest buildings. It is centred around the wide High Street, but with

short extensions into adjoining roads, including Waterloo Road. Buildings on both sides of the High Street retain the character and appearance of a Surrey market town, despite some more modern additions. It is the historic layout of the High Street and the wealth of architectural styles, materials and details, which give character, interest and identity to the CA.

6. The appeal property is a two storey, flat roof building with a simple façade facing Waterloo Road. Whilst it lacks the traditional detailing of some buildings nearby, it is of a scale and form that is appropriate to the CA and therefore makes a neutral contribution to its significance.
7. The proposal is for an internally illuminated fascia sign. Amended plans submitted during the course of the application in response to the Council's conservation officer's comments detail a dark background and a revised font to the lettering. Only the individual letters within the box would be illuminated.
8. The Council consider the colour of the signage and font design of the lettering to be appropriate and in proportion with the building's windows, doors and the signage on adjoining properties. I concur with this view. The Council's main concern is therefore in relation to the internal illumination of the fascia sign which would be contrary to the guidance set out in the Shopfront Design Guide (2012). This guidance, amongst other matters, advises that in conservation areas, internal illumination should not be used on signs, fasciae or lettering, apart from the 'green cross' chemist sign. However, these guidelines should not be applied prescriptively to the exclusion of all other considerations.
9. There are a wide variety of advertisement types within the CA, reflecting its town centre location. The illumination of signage is common throughout the CA, including internally and externally illuminated fascia signs and individual illuminated lettering. Whilst internally illuminated box signs are less widespread within the CA, one exception is in respect to Epsom Barbers which is immediately adjacent to the appeal site. The Council confirm that this sign does not benefit from advertisement consent and, in their view, should not be relied upon as a precedent. The appellant does not dispute this but has also stated that the sign has been in existence on the site for in excess of 2 years.
10. Notwithstanding the Council's observations regarding the signage at Epsom Barbers, the existing fascia signage on properties within the CA along Waterloo Road is highly mixed in terms of the design, width and depth of fascia, materials and the method of illumination. There are also several projecting box signs. There is therefore very little uniformity, and the street scene is capable of accommodating some variety.
11. The appearance of the proposed fascia sign would be likely to be fairly subtle as only the letters are proposed to be illuminated within the otherwise dark background. As noted above, illumination is not unusual in the town centre, particular in relation to night-time businesses. I am therefore satisfied that given the context of the appeal site, the proposed sign would not stand out as incongruous, over-dominant or unduly prominent in relation to the building or the street scene. Furthermore, I am satisfied that there would be no adverse effect on the setting of the grade II listed building at 66 High Street (Coral).

12. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed fascia sign would not cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and that the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved.
13. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are relevant. Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy 2007, Policies DM8, DM9, DM10, DM14 and DM15 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework seek to protect amenity and so are relevant in this case. I have concluded that the fascia sign would not harm amenity, and therefore the appeal proposal complies with these policies.

Conditions

14. The five standard conditions as set out in the Regulations apply. I have imposed the approved plans conditions in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR