



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2025 by Kim Vo MPLAN

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/25/3366945

3 Cranbourn Street, City of Westminster, London WC2H 7AL

- 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. Craig Hannah against the decision of the City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01356/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as “Sign A 6 off internally illuminated letters. Sign B 2 off internally illuminated letters”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

3. Amended plans have been submitted, but the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme. What is considered should be the same as was by the Council and interested parties at application stage. For the avoidance of doubt therefore, I have taken the originally submitted plans into account in my findings.
4. The City Plan Partial Review is currently at examination. It includes updated policies on matters not relevant for this appeal. In any case, the policies referred to will be taken into account as material considerations. Power to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Council do not have concerns on the latter, and I have no reason to disagree. My recommendation therefore focuses on the effect of the advertisements on amenity, with specific regard to the Leicester Square Conservation Area (LSCA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal building has a visually striking façade architecturally. Whilst unlisted, it has a marble finish and art deco elements, notably the figure reliefs flanking the top parts of the building which depict the spirits of sight and sound. The grandness of the building presentation, and these features, hark to its historic theatre use. As well as low level signage above the entrance doors at street level, there is a high level stacking sign which is intrinsically part of a centralised pillar. The lettering of which is folded along a crease facing the street. The post modern feel of its design

adds to the architectural qualities and historic artistry of the building's frontage, contributing positively to the significance of the LSCA.

6. The wider area is very vibrant. It contains a number of historic buildings. Leicester Square is a dense concentration of uses centred around the tourism and entertainment industry so obvious, colourful and in some cases modern signage is not uncommon. Including the appeal site, high level advertisements do feature. In this context, the fascia letter signs would be more obvious than the existing situation mainly due to their method of illumination. However, they would be tucked away below the roof canopy and would match the dimensions of the existing signage. They would also integrate well with surrounding advertisements, where ground floor illuminated letter signs to fascia's are common within the square.
7. That said, the high level signage would be formed of box individual letters, mounted to both sides of the aforementioned V-shaped metal structure. Together with their elevated placement and proposed internal illumination style, their visibility within the streetscape would be considerably increased. As well as the loss of the artistic manner in which the existing stacked sign presents which would be unfortunate, the effect of this is that the new sign would jar awkwardly with the historic architectural qualities of the building's upper sections and unacceptably erode the positive effect that this and its other elements have on the character and appearance (amenity for the purposes of the regulations) of the LSCA.
8. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This statutory duty applies in advert appeals insofar as it relates to the consideration of amenity.
9. With this and the above in mind, the high level advertisement would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area. Contrary to the aims of Policies 38, 39 and 43(G) of the City Plan 2021, as far as they are material to the main issue. These policies seek, amongst others, for advertisements to make a positive contribution to amenity, for heritage assets to be preserved and enhanced, and for regard to be had to the character and appearance of the existing area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. Due to the harm I have found to amenity, the advertisement is not acceptable under the aforementioned regulations. I therefore recommend the appeal be dismissed.

Kim Vo

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR