



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by N Armstrong BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/25/3369568

1 Lower John Street, City of Westminster, London W1F 9DT

- 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 Blow Up Media UK Ltd against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03430/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is temporary decorative scaffold shroud advertisement printed onto PVC comprising a 1:1 replica image of the building façade with an inset area for sponsors advertising measuring 10.8 x 5.7 metres.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) require that advertisements be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Council has not suggested that the proposal would affect public safety, and I see no reason to disagree.
3. There is no dispute between the parties that the display of a 1:1 rendering of the building would enhance the appearance of scaffolding to the building, and I find no reason to disagree. Therefore, the focus of this appeal is the proposed advertisement space that would form part of the shroud.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area, with particular regard to the Soho Conservation Area (SCA) and the Regent Street Conservation Area (RSCA).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a four-storey building located in a busy area with a mix of uses. The site occupies a highly prominent position on the corner of Lower John Street and Brewer Street, and close to Air Street opposite. The overall height and relatively close grouping of buildings around this junction contribute to a greater sense of enclosure compared to more open spaces elsewhere in the area. Existing advertisements in the vicinity of the appeal site are predominantly characterised by smaller-scale signage associated with ground floor commercial uses. I saw scaffolding extending around the full extent of the appeal property at

the time of my visit, which projects over the pavement of Lower John Street and Brewer Street, although no shroud was in place.

6. The site is within the SCA. It also lies adjacent to the RSCA, and the officer report highlights its proximity to a number of listed buildings in the vicinity. I have therefore also had regard to the effect of the proposed advertisement within the setting of the RSCA and surrounding listed buildings¹, insofar as factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic interest.
7. The significance of the SCA derives from its vibrant mix of uses, the scale and appearance of buildings, and the relatively dense layout and street patterns alongside areas of formal open space, which contribute to its overall architectural and historic interest. The appeal site contributes to this significance through the scale of the building in a very prominent corner position and an approach into and out of the SCA. The significance of the RSCA derives from the formal layout and substantial number of significant buildings situated on Regent Street itself, as well as its adjacent streets. The appeal property lies within the setting of the RSCA due to its close position immediately adjacent to the boundary on Brewer Street, and the intervisibility in views towards the site from Air Street and Golden Square. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal, the surrounding listed buildings derive significance from their architectural character.
8. The proposal would introduce a substantial, higher-level area for advertisements covering part of the first and second floor levels of the building, wrapping around the elevations on the street corner. Whilst it would be static and would not occupy the full extent of the shroud, it would be a visually intrusive addition at this level, which would dominate its setting and be out of scale and character with the smaller-scale and more restrained nature of other advertisements in the immediate area. The projection of the scaffolding from the front of the building, along with the overall height and the close relationship of buildings, would exacerbate the prominence and adverse visual impact of the advertisement in this location.
9. Whilst the Planning Practice Guidance notes that buildings which are being renovated and have scaffolding or netting around them may be considered suitable as temporary sites for shroud or large 'wrap' advertisements, this does not justify the harm that I have identified from what would be an incongruous feature in this historic environment. Despite the temporary period that is sought and the added visual interest that the replica image of the building's façade would provide to screen the scaffolding, the proposed advertisement would have a significant and detrimental visual impact upon the amenity of the area. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the SCA as well as the setting of the adjacent RSCA and surrounding listed buildings.
10. I have had regard to the appeal decision at 1 Dorset Square², and I note some similarities with the scheme before me in terms of the overall nature of the proposal, its scale, location within a conservation area and the corner position of the site. However, I have not been provided with full details of this and its site context, therefore I am unable to draw any direct comparisons with the appeal scheme that would weigh in its favour. Although the appellant suggests such

¹ No 2 Lower John Street, Nos 4 and 4a Lower John Street, the Regent Palace Hotel, 19 Golden Square and 20 Golden Square.

² Appeal Decision ref APP/X5990/Z/24/335614, dated 8 January 2025

displays are becoming more common, I did not observe other similar examples of these within the immediate area of the site or the SCA. In any event, each proposal must be dealt with on its own individual merits, and my assessment is based on the impact on amenity in this specific location.

11. Whilst the appellant has suggested that the proposed illumination is an optional feature it is clearly indicated on the application plans. Notwithstanding, the removal of the proposed illumination would not alter my overall findings as set out above.
12. I conclude that the appeal proposal would have a harmful effect on the amenity of the area, with particular regard to the SCA and the RSCA. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are relevant to amenity. Policies 38, 39 and 43 of the City of Westminster City Plan 2019-2040 seek to protect amenity, therefore they are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with these policies.
13. For the same reasons the proposal would also be contrary to paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states, amongst other things, that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Other Matters

14. The appellant states that the proposed advertisement would assist with raising funds for the previously approved restoration work³ through revenue from sponsor advertising and this would also fund the shroud. However, I have limited information before me to indicate that the 1:1 rendering shroud could not be financed by other means nor a mechanism before me to secure the funding for this purpose. Notwithstanding, this matter nor any other potential benefits of the added visual interest to the building when scaffolding is in place, would not outweigh or justify the harm that I have found. In addition, given the harm from the advertisement, I do not consider that the appellant's suggested conditions would make the scheme acceptable.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would harm amenity, and the appeal should be dismissed.

N Armstrong

INSPECTOR

³ Application ref 24/08966/FULL