



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025

by Ann Veevers BA(Hons) Dip(BCon) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/25/3369255

The Lost Dene, 144-146 Grampian House, Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EE

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Arron Midgley of Stonegate, against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 142604/AO/2025.
 - The advertisement proposed is 3no. illuminated fascia signs and 1no. illuminated projecting sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for the display of 3no. illuminated fascia signs and 1no. illuminated projecting sign the at The Lost Dene, 144-146 Grampian House, Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 142604/AO/2025. 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 maximum luminance of the signage shall not exceed 300cd/m2 in brightness at any time.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the description of the adverts as set out in the Council's decision notice in the banner heading above, omitting unnecessary wording.
3. The Council issued a split decision, wherein 2no. illuminated fascia signs were approved and 1no. illuminated fascia sign (described in Part 2 of the Council's decision notice as a logo board fascia sign) and 1no. illuminated projecting sign were refused consent. The appeal is solely concerned with the refused signs, indicated on the plans submitted with the application, and included on the Council's decision notice, as Item 4 and Item 5 on drawing ref. 531 Rev H. These signs have already been installed.
4. The site is located within the Deansgate Conservation Area (DCA) and is adjacent to the Albert Square Conservation Area (ASCA). I am also aware from the evidence that the appeal site is adjacent to a Grade I listed building referred to on the National Heritage List for England as 'John Rylands Library and attached railings, gates and lamp standards'¹ (the Library). The Council has not specifically objected to the appeal signs in relation to the DCA, the setting of the ASCA or the setting of the listed building in its decision notice.

¹ List Entry number: 1217800

5. The Regulations set out that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest². Planning Practice Guidance similarly explains, 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 features³. I have had regard to this and have determined the appeals accordingly.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the illuminated logo board fascia sign and the illuminated projecting sign on visual amenity.

Reasons

7. The five-storey building on which the signs have been installed is located at the corner of Wood Street and Deansgate, a busy and vibrant commercial street in Manchester city centre. The appeal relates to a ground floor commercial unit occupied by a public house. Although the appeal building itself is not listed, both parties agree it is of some historic and architectural merit as a 19th century building with large symmetrical columns, unadorned friezes on the upper storeys and is constructed with a white stone façade.
8. The DCA has a lively, predominantly commercial character. It also includes several notable buildings used for community and leisure purposes. There are a closely knit but diverse range of buildings of architectural and historic interest within the DCA, including the Grade I listed Library, which, insofar as relevant to this appeal and from the evidence, I find partly defines its significance. Given its prominent location and pleasing historic design, the appeal building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the DCA.
9. The ASCA is adjacent to the appeal site, on the opposite side of Deansgate. While there is no statutory protection for the setting of the ASCA, any harm to its significance from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification. From the information before me, pertinent to this appeal, the significance of the ASCA is focused around Manchester Town Hall but derives in part from its historic grain and built fabric and the interplay between this and more modern interventions providing diversity. The surrounding area, including the appeal site, is of similar mixed urban grain and forms both the immediate and wider visual, functional and historic setting to the ASCA which contributes to its significance and the ability to appreciate that significance.
10. There are many buildings of different scale, materials, form and age along each side of the busy Deansgate road. Given the commercial nature of many of these and the large number of visitors to the city centre, there are a variety of existing and historic advertisements in the area. With this in mind, and so far as relevant to this appeal, an identified purpose of the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (undated) (DG) is to set out best practice for signage design across the city in order to promote positive change and consistency. While the DG does not refer specifically to signage on public houses, it provides a useful guide when considering the design of signs within an urban context.

² Regulation 3(2) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

³ Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306

11. The logo board fascia sign is a round aluminium panel incorporating vinyl lettering, illuminated by a small light above the fascia. It is positioned on a prominent location of the appeal building on the chamfered fascia. Although this sign is not rectangular and in this regard is neither the same shape as the granite fascia it occupies, nor similar to other fascia signs on the building, it is small and unobtrusive.
12. The projecting sign in all respects meets the guidelines set out in the DG, with the exception that it has a greater maximum depth than 30mm. However, the DG also advises that signs should relate well to the building's overall composition, character, scale and architectural features. Given the significant depth of the granite fascia, I find the size of the illuminated projecting sign in this case would harmonise with the proportions of the building and form part of a cohesive arrangement of signs on the building. Furthermore, the sign does not relate to a shop front. Traditional projecting signs on public houses are often varied in their size and position on the building. Such signs often form part of the individual character of the public house itself and the host building, as I saw at the Sawyers Arms nearby, which includes a projecting sign at first floor level.
13. The Council assert that the projecting sign contrasts with signage on surrounding buildings. While this is true in part, it is not so large or conspicuous that it stands out from other signage in the area. The presence of the many other signs, including ones with differing illumination and shapes, mean the proposal would not be incongruous, dominant or at odds with the vibrancy or character of the area or the street scene.
14. I note the Council's concern that wording used in both the appeal signs is 'extraneous', which the DG advises should be avoided. However, the content of the signs includes the logo and name of the pub company associated with the premises which I find reasonable and appropriate.
15. Overall, neither the logo board fascia sign nor the projecting sign dominates the building and neither do they conceal, obscure or damage any elements or detailing of the public house frontage or the building that positively contribute to its architectural interest. They do not detract from the wider street scene, the character or appearance of the DCA, or the setting of the ASCA.
16. Consequently, the illuminated logo board fascia sign and the illuminated projecting sign do not harm visual amenity. Insofar as they are relevant materials considerations, these signs accord with the Act, Policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted July 2012, Policy DC14 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, adopted 1995 and Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan, adopted 2024. These, amongst other things, seek that the scale, design and appearance of development has regard to the character of an area, the architectural features of a building, and that the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are conserved.
17. I also find no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to protect the quality and character of places from poorly sited and designed advertisements and ensure that the historic environment is protected.

Other Matters

18. The Grade I listed Library is identified by the Council as a landmark building within the DCA. I have been provided with the list description for the building which identifies the red sandstone building was built as a library at the end of the 19th century. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal, and from the information before me, I consider the significance and special interest of the building largely derive from its historic and architectural interest. Important contributors in these regards are the building's surviving historic fabric, including its fine, elaborate Gothic decoration indicative of its Grade I status. Special interests and significance are also associated with the building's historic links as a building to house the theological library of the leading textile manufacturer and philanthropist John Rylands and its public function which link to the local community.
19. The appeal building is part of the varied urban setting of the Library. A diverse range of buildings and commercial uses are already experienced within this setting and in many cases, seen with advertisements of various sizes, shapes and levels of illumination. As such, the logo and projection signs within this setting do not diminish the ability to appreciate the Library's heritage significance. I therefore find that its setting is preserved, and its significance not harmed.
20. My attention has been drawn by the Council to other projecting signs that meet the relevant depth size elsewhere in the city centre, and along Deansgate. While there are locational similarities between the sites, I do not have full details of these other signs and the considerations at the time of them being given permission. No sizes are provided in relation to the 'Deansgate Signage Montage' examples, some of which are not located on facias or appear to be of greater depth, and none of the signs referred to relate to public houses. Therefore, the circumstances are materially different to the scheme before me.
21. I have determined the appeal on its own merits and concluded that the signs are acceptable for the reasons set out above. My decision is based on the specific characteristics of this public house and this appeal building, and I see no reason as to why it should set a precedent for other signage in the area.
22. The appeal signs are positioned amongst a mix of advertisements also near junctions, crossings and other pedestrian and vehicle routes. The Council indicate that the signs at the appeal site do not give rise to any public safety concerns and, from the evidence before me and observations at my site visit, I have no reason to disagree.

Conditions

23. In addition to the standard conditions set out in the Regulations, I have also conditioned illumination levels as suggested in the Council's questionnaire, in the interests of public safety and visual amenity.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed.

Ann Veevers

INSPECTOR