



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2025

by **E Catcheside BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/H/25/3361782

Shop, 17-19 Castle Meadow, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 3DH

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against conditions imposed when granting express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hicham El Aouissi against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application reference 24/01220/A was approved on 3 December 2024 and express consent was granted for the display of an advertisement subject to conditions.
 - The advertisement permitted is described as “display of 1 no. fascia sign (retrospective)”.
 - The condition in dispute is No 6 which states that: No part of the advertisement hereby approved shall be illuminated at any time.
 - The reasons given for the condition is: To enable the local planning authority to ensure the protection of the historic and architectural importance of the building’s setting and surroundings, in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and the express consent reference 24/01220/A for 1 no. fascia sign granted on 3 December 2024 by Norwich City Council is varied by deleting condition No 6 and substituting it for the following condition:

“The level of illumination of the advertisement hereby consented shall not at any time during the hours of darkness exceed 400cd/m².”

Preliminary Matters

2. I have removed the word ‘retrospective’ from the description of the advertisement in my formal decision, because it is not necessary to describe the advertisement.
3. The fascia sign that is the subject of this appeal has been erected, and I observed it during daylight hours and when, during my site visit, it was illuminated in the dark late afternoon. In the absence of an appeal statement from the Council, I have identified and considered the main issues in this appeal based on the information before me as well as my own observations of the advertisement and the area.
4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) require that applications for the display of advertisements are considered in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, insofar as they are material, and any other relevant factors. The Regulations also set out that the factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest. I have considered the appeal accordingly.

5. As the site lies within a conservation area, I have had regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).

Background and Main Issue

6. Express advertisement consent was granted on 3 December 2024 for display of the fascia sign. The consent was subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and condition 6, which prohibits the illumination of the sign at any time. The reason given for condition 6 is: *“to enable the local planning authority to ensure the protection of the historic and architectural importance of the building’s setting and surroundings, in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan 2014”*.
7. The main issue is whether condition 6 is necessary and reasonable in the interests of amenity, with particular regard to the effects of the advertisement on the character and appearance of the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area (CCCA) and the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Reasons

8. The host building lies within the CCCA, which encompasses the whole of the city that lies within the medieval city walls. The Norwich City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2007) (CAA) explains that the first ‘urban’ settlement at Norwich dates from the 8th Century but that its development has been influenced by growth through successive eras to the modern day. The CCCA comprises a high concentration of historic buildings, many of which are designated heritage assets or are locally listed. The significance of the CCCA is derived in part from the mix of buildings, streets, and spaces within it that reveal the evolution of the city over the long period of its development.
9. At the heart of the CCCA, and immediately opposite the appeal site, is Norwich Castle which is a Grade I listed building¹ and a Scheduled Monument². Sited on a mound, the castle is a commanding landmark, comprising a hall keep dating from the 12th Century with later additions including a former prison building. The castle has special architectural and historic interest due, in part, to its rich architectural detailing and layout which enable certain aspects of medieval society, warfare and defence to be understood alongside development that originates from other eras.
10. The curvature of Castle Meadow hugs the base of the castle mound, enabling the grandeur and importance of the castle to be experienced from below. It also provides spatial separation between the castle and the wider city centre thus indicating the presence of an infilled moat and archaeology that exists beneath the surrounding road network. These characteristics of the castle’s setting contribute to its special interest.
11. The frontage terrace on Castle Meadow, which includes the appeal site, provides an attractive mix of buildings including the Grade II listed buildings known as 20 Castle Meadow³ and 23 Castle Meadow⁴; and 38-40 London Street which is

¹ List entry number 1372724

² List entry number 1004054

³ List entry number 1051355

⁴ List entry number 1051356

locally listed. From the information before me, and my observations, the special interest of these buildings originates, in part, from their form and architectural details which reveal information about their traditional functions and the period in which they were constructed.

12. As part of this prominent frontage that forms a key transition route between the castle and the historic shopping areas to the east and south, the appeal site contributes positively to the significance of the CCCA. It also forms an important part of the immediate setting of Norwich Castle, 20 Castle Meadow, 23 Castle Meadow, and 38-40 London Street in that, amongst other things, it helps to reveal their association with the wider historic settlement and trading centre. Castle Meadow, including the host property, forms an important part of the historic commercial setting of these designated and non-designated heritage assets; and it contributes positively to their special interest and significance.
13. Given the concentration of retail, service, and food outlets along the street and its proximity to several key shopping streets within the city, Castle Meadow has a clear commercial character with a plethora of signage including shop fascias, some of which are illuminated. The CAA identifies Castle Meadow as an informal bus station, which aligns with my own observations of the street. Indeed, the near continuous presence of buses on the road was a dominant feature of the area at the time of my site visit. The headlights of these vehicles, when combined with street lighting, internal lighting from within premises, and illuminated shop signs, creates an environment that is not devoid of lighting after sundown.
14. The fascia that is the subject of this appeal has a boxy design with a white background and distinctive red lettering. The illumination of the whole fascia has a blockier appearance than the other lit signs I observed on Castle Meadow, which typically include more discrete lighting to lettering only. However, the box-like design and colours of the advertisement have already been established; and due to its modest size and the prevalence of other light sources in the area, its illumination does not and would not cause harmful visual competition with the nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets.
15. Furthermore, it is common for commercial premises in primary shopping areas to use lighting to draw the attention of potential customers. Indeed, the CAA notes that the nighttime economy contributes to the vitality and viability of the CA. Therefore, the illumination of the sign would not be incongruent in this vibrant city centre location, notwithstanding its sensitive historic context.
16. Overall, I find that condition 6 is neither reasonable nor necessary, having regard to the requirements of the Regulations and the tests for conditions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Its removal would not have a harmful effect on amenity, and it would preserve the character and the appearance of the CCCA. Furthermore, the removal of condition 6 would not cause harm to the setting and significance of the heritage assets known as Norfolk Castle, 20 Castle Meadow, 23 Castle Meadow, and 38-40 London Street.
17. In coming to this view, I have taken account of Policy DM9 of the Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan (Adopted December 2014) which seeks to ensure that proposals maximise opportunities to preserve, enhance, or better reveal the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets,

and so is material in this case. Given my conclusions in respect of the heritage assets, the proposal does not conflict with this policy. There would also be no conflict with the historic environment provisions of the Framework.

Conditions

18. The Council suggested a substitute condition, which I have considered with regard to the provisions of the Regulations and the tests for conditions set out in the Framework and the PPG.
19. The PPG states that the types of advertisement that may cause a danger to road users include illuminated signs which, because of their size or brightness, would result in glare and dazzle, or would distract road users, particularly in misty or wet weather. Therefore, in the interests of highway safety, it is necessary to control the level of illuminance through a condition to prevent a visual distraction or harmful dazzling effect being caused to road users.
20. It is not clear how the Council has determined that 400cd/m² would be an appropriate upper restriction on illuminance. However, it reflects the level of illumination proposed on the application form and there is no alternative restriction level before me. Therefore, I have no reason to conclude that 400cd/m² is not a reasonable upper limit, and this is reflected in the condition I have imposed.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed and the express advertisement consent reference 24/01220/A is varied by deleting condition 6 and replacing it with the condition set out above.

E Catchside
INSPECTOR