



Appeal Decisions

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 December 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/G2625/W/25/3367311

15-17 Haymarket, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 1QL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application reference is 25/00224/F.
 - The development proposed is erection of 1no. digital slimline advertising display.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/G2625/H/25/3363394

15-17 Haymarket, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 1QL

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application reference is 24/01483/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1no. digital slimline advertising display. During daylight the display shall not exceed 3,500cd/m² (30% reduction of the level recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 2023 PLG 05 guidance). At night the display shall not exceed 150cd/m² (50% of the ILP guidance level). Illumination will adapt & adjust in accordance with the ambient conditions, increasing in bright conditions (not exceed 3,500cd/m²) and decreasing in low light conditions. Rate of Change: adverts will update 1/10 seconds over a 1 minute cycle with an instant change and no special effects. A voluntary curfew will be implemented from 23.00hrs – 06.00hrs where the screen is switched off.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. Each of the appeals relates to the installation of a digital slimline advertising display. The difference between them is that Appeal A is for planning permission, including for alterations to the façade of the host property, and Appeal B is for express advertisement consent. Although I have considered each proposal on its own merits, I have dealt with the two appeals together except where I have indicated otherwise, to avoid unnecessary duplication.
4. The descriptions of the development and the advertisement are taken from the respective application forms. However, references to further information in enclosed documents have been removed for the purpose of brevity. I have nonetheless had regard to all of the documents provided with the appeals in coming to my decisions.

5. As the appeal site lies within a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). The decision notice for Appeal A does not refer to the nearby listed buildings. However, it is necessary for me to consider the effect of Appeal A on the listed buildings because of my statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Act.

Background and Main Issue

6. 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 Council has not identified any harm would arise from Appeal B in respect of public safety. Based on the evidence and my own observations, I see no reason to take a different view. I have therefore focused my consideration of Appeal B on its effects on amenity.
7. The Regulations also set out that the factors relevant to amenity in the consideration of advertisement appeals include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest. I have had regard to these factors in my identification of the main issue in respect of Appeal B.
8. For both appeals, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area (CCCA) and the setting of nearby listed and locally listed buildings.

Reasons

Heritage assets, significance, and setting

9. 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; and that its evolution has been strongly influenced by trade and commerce through several eras. The CCCA comprises a high concentration of historic buildings, many of which are designated assets or are locally listed. The significance of the CCCA is derived in part from its rich mix of buildings, streets, and spaces that reveal the mercantile history of the city as it has developed over a long period of time.
10. The appeal building fronts onto Haymarket, near to its intersection with Orford Place and Brigg Street. It forms part of the St Stephens Character Area of the CA, which is a busy commercial and shopping area. Alongside large, relatively modern buildings such as The Forum, the area contains many historic buildings and spaces that reinforce the historical importance of this part of the city. The area encompassing the appeal site therefore contributes to the significance of the CCCA as a whole.
11. The Grade I listed Church of St Peter Mancroft¹ is a tall and imposing structure, which is identified within the CAA as one of six city-wide landmarks. Its significance is partly derived from its scale, height, and architectural detailing,

¹ List entry number 1210490

which collectively highlight its role as a high-status building, displaying wealth and power, from the 15th Century.

12. The heritage value of the area is further reinforced by the presence of several other buildings of historic importance near to the site. These include the Grade II* listed building at 3 and 4 Haymarket²; the Grade II listed buildings known as 2 and 4 Brigg Street³, 14 Haymarket⁴, 19-21 Haymarket⁵, and 7-13 Orford Place⁶; and the locally listed buildings at 1 Orford Place and 11 Haymarket. These buildings have special historic interest due, in part, to the architectural quality of their attractive facades, which reveal information about the eras in which they were constructed.
13. Notwithstanding the presence of trees, which had reduced foliage at the time of my site visit, the church is prominent in views from Haymarket and Orford Place due to its height, scale, and orientation; as well as the open character of the Hay Hill urban space, where the Grade II listed Statue of Sir Thomas Browne⁷ can be found. Whilst Hay Hill has not always been devoid of large buildings, it is now a relatively calm and inviting space to dwell in the otherwise busy and densely built-up nature of the city centre. When taken together with the generous width of Haymarket, Hay Hill provides a sense of openness to the setting of the church, allowing for views along the 'positive vista' identified in the CAA, and better revealing its special interest.
14. I observed that, when transitioning along this relatively short stretch of Haymarket between Brigg Street or Orford Place and Gentleman's Walk, passers-by can experience each of these historic buildings, and their proximity to one another, from various angles. Whilst some views of the buildings may be partially obscured from certain perspectives when the trees are in full leaf, this is not the case for much of the year, when I saw that the trees provide a pleasant soft framing effect through which the historic built form can be appreciated. The settings of the buildings therefore provide information about their development as well as their association with the growth of this part of the city; and this aspect of their settings contributes to the significance of the assets. It follows that Haymarket, including the appeal site, has high sensitivity to change notwithstanding the presence of modern buildings alongside the older structures.
15. The glazing on the upper façade of the appeal building is of limited architectural merit, and it lacks the solidity of the materials used on some neighbouring buildings. Indeed, the property is identified within the CAA as a 'negative building'. However, due to the mix of earthy and dark coloured glass, the existing façade has a reasonably muted appearance that is not overly conspicuous or obtrusive. For this reason, I do not find the building to detract from the significance of the nearby listed and locally-listed buildings, or the CCCA, but rather I find it to be a neutral building within the wider historic context.
16. In addition to the heritage assets referenced above, there are several other historic buildings referred to in the evidence. These include the Grade I listed Church of St

² List entry number 1209850

³ List entry number 1205883

⁴ List entry number 1051256

⁵ List entry number 1372797

⁶ List entry number 1219638

⁷ List entry number 1051258

Stephen⁸; the Grade II listed Lamb Inn⁹ and The St George and Dragon¹⁰; and the locally listed Marks & Spencer building at 1-25 Rampant Horse Street, which have special interest due, in part, to their architecture and historic uses. Given the densely-packed nature of the surrounding built form, and the orientation of buildings, there is limited visual connection between the site and these assets. Therefore, whilst the appeal site lies within the setting of these buildings, it does not contribute to their significance insofar as it is relevant to these appeals.

Impacts of the proposal

17. As is often the case in core shopping areas such as this, there is a range of street furniture nearby and many advertisements including shop fascia and window signs. Indeed, the evidence shows these features have been characteristic of the area for a long time. However, notwithstanding the large digital display I observed at the north entrance to Chantry Place and the smaller displays I saw on the first floor of the building opposite the site, most of the existing advertisements in this area are modest in scale and low in height. In this context, the proposed advertisement would be an incongruent feature in this locality due to the combined effect of its excessive size and elevated height.
18. I acknowledge that the illumination level of the display would be adjusted to respond to the ambient conditions and would be well below the recommended limits of The Institute of Lighting Professionals insofar as they have been referred to in the evidence. However, the display would nonetheless be prominent from nearby public vantage points due to its disproportionate scale and siting, and it would be particularly conspicuous from nearby on Haymarket and when approaching the site from Orford Place.
19. The replacement of the existing glazed façade with brick would create greater alignment with the prevailing materials on some other nearby facades. However, when combined with the large advert, the upper storey would serve as the most prominent part of the building, which would be uncharacteristic in this location where neighbouring properties are typically more animated at ground floor level. Moreover, without the advert in place, the façade would present as a largely blank wall which would have a monotonous and unattractive appearance that fails to reflect local character. In either scenario, the appearance of the building would be less sympathetic to the locality than the existing scenario.
20. Due to its discordance in the local context, the proposal would detract from the ability of passers-by to experience and appreciate the rich history of this historic area. Specifically, the proposals would provide a visual distraction that competes with the attractive facades of 2 and 4 Brigg Street, 3 and 4 Haymarket, 11 Haymarket, 14 Haymarket, 19-21 Haymarket, 1 Orford Place, and 7-13 Orford Place thus diminishing the information they reveal about the past. Moreover, the proposals would divert attention from the views across Hay Hill towards the Church of St Peter Mancroft. Therefore, there would be an adverse effect on how the Grade I church is experienced from within its setting, which would harm its significance.

⁸ List entry number 1051920

⁹ List entry number 1051934

¹⁰ List entry number 1209872

21. The appellant invites me to consider that digital advertisements are an established feature in Norwich and other cities; and I have been provided with examples of similar schemes near to heritage assets in other locations around the UK. I do not have sufficient information before me to be certain as to the circumstances that led to those advertisements becoming established. However, they are unlikely to be directly comparable to the appeal proposal and the specific characteristics of this site and the surroundings. Therefore, those other schemes are not determinative to the outcome of these appeals which I have necessarily considered on their own merits and with regard to the local context.
22. The special interest of the Church of St Stephen, the Lamb Inn, The St George and Dragon, and the Marks & Spencer building would be preserved due to the tightly defined nature of their settings insofar as they are relevant to these appeals. However, the proposals would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CCCA and they would also fail to preserve the settings of the buildings known as the Church of St Peter Mancroft, 2 and 4 Brigg Street, 3 and 4 Haymarket, 11 Haymarket, 14 Haymarket, 1 Orford Place, and 7-13 Orford Place, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. It follows that, in the case of Appeal B, the advertisement would cause harm to the amenity.

Heritage balance

23. The harm that would be caused to the designated heritage assets would be less than substantial and of a moderate degree due to the scale and height of the advertisement, and the sensitivity of the location. In accordance with the historic environment policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which are applicable to Appeal A, I ascribe great weight to the conservation of the designated heritage assets, with the greatest of weight in this case being ascribed to the harm to the Grade I listed church.
24. The Framework states that any harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets requires clear and convincing justification, and that the less than substantial harm I have identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In the case of the non-designated heritage assets, the Framework requires me to make a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
25. As I have set out above, the appeal proposals would adversely affect the appearance of the building in this historically sensitive location and, accordingly, I find no public benefit arising from the proposed alterations to the façade. There would be some economic public benefits associated with the advertising of goods and services. However, the benefits arising would be modest in comparison to the levels of trade and commerce in this area. Consequently, the public benefits of the proposal in this case would not outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the heritage harm I have identified in respect of the designated heritage assets. Nor, in my judgement, would the benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of the locally listed buildings.
26. Overall, and with regard to the duties imposed on me by the Act, the harm that would be caused to the heritage assets would be contrary to Policy DM9 of the Norwich Local Plan Development Management Policies 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 to both appeals. There would also be conflict with the historic environment provisions of the Framework.

Conclusion

27. For the reasons given above, Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is dismissed.

E Catchside
INSPECTOR