



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 November 2025

by **S Sharp BSc(Hons) BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/Z/25/3371390

70 Whitley Street, Reading RG2 0EQ

- 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 Ali Yilmaz against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application reference is PL/25/0866.
 - The advertisement proposed is a signboard for existing Turkish Halal Food Center.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have noted from submissions that there is an advertisement displayed at the appeal site, above the entrance, which appears to match that shown on the plans before me. There is common ground between the appellant and the Council that the plans show what is displayed and that the appeal seeks retrospective consent. I have no evidence before me to conclude differently, and the decision is therefore phrased accordingly.
3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. The Council has referred to policies in its development plan document. I have taken relevant policies into account in my assessment where they relate to proposals for advertisements.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the visual amenity of the area including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The site lies within the Christchurch Conservation Area (CCA). In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CCA. I have also had regard to the identification by the Council of No 70 Whitley Road as a Building of Townscape Merit (a non-designated heritage asset).

6. The appeal site falls within Character Area 4 as defined by the Council's CCA Appraisal (November 2024). The area is characterised by an intersection of busy roads including Whitley Street and predominantly nineteenth century development of aesthetic, architectural and historic value. There is a high pedestrian footfall on both sides of this street, this appearing to result from the number of commercial premises, including at the appeal site, as well as bus stops and a nearby school. There are several colourful advertisements present, particularly serving the row of commercial premises on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site.
7. The plethora of advertisements contribute to the area's character and appearance, but they complement rather than dominate or visually conflict with the nineteenth century architecture that is identified as being important in the CCA Appraisal. The appeal building is a landmark building dating from this period. Although not listed, it is of local significance because of its architectural and historical qualities and its setting within the CCA.
8. The elevation upon which the advertisement is displayed is prominent in one of the views identified in the CCA Appraisal. This view is from the north end of Whitley Street at the intersection with Mount Pleasant and Southampton Street. The eye is drawn to this elevation because, unlike the facades of the commercial premises on the opposite side of Whitley Street, it faces directly towards the viewpoint. An existing, illuminated 48-sheet display hoarding, sits above the advertisement. From the north end of Whitley Street, this hoarding is a dominant, modern, illuminated feature in the view and establishes a strong visual presence.
9. The prominence of the elevation in the view remains as one walks southwards on Whitley Street towards the appeal site, but it is the ground floor of the north elevation, rather than the hoarding above, that gradually becomes the focus of your attention. This is because the hoarding gradually disappears beyond the upward periphery of your vision. In contrast, the advertisement, displayed directly above the ground floor windows and door, remains in view. By reason of its modern design, width and overall area, it appears as an unattractive and obtrusive feature within the series of views southwards from the north end of Whitley Street to the appeal site. The resultant harm to amenity neither preserves nor enhances the character and appearance of the CCA.
10. The advertisement also has a harmful effect on the appearance of 70, Whitley Street. This Building of Townscape Merit's original architectural detailing is mostly restricted to the principal elevation facing east. However, from viewpoints within the CCA, on the east side of Whitley Road, both this elevation and the north facing gable end to which the advertisement is displayed, are seen in the same views. By reason of its size and design, it distracts the eye away from the architectural quality of the principal, east facing elevation and is an incongruous addition given its juxtaposition with that façade. This results in further harm to the character and appearance of the CCA, given the building's importance as a landmark within this designation and could not be mitigated by limiting the illumination.
11. I acknowledge that the advertisement relates to the shop operating from the same building and that such advertisements are essential for such businesses to attract custom. However, this consideration does not outweigh my findings that it results in harm to the amenity of the area, neither preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the CCA and thus failing the related statutory test. It also conflicts with policies EN1 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

which advises that proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

Conclusion

12. The advertisement does not result in any harm to public safety nor any harm to the amenity considerations specific to living conditions of nearby residents. However, there are effects described in this decision that collectively result in significant harm to amenity, specifically the effect on the character and appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area. The level of harm is determinative and the appeal is dismissed.

S Sharp

INSPECTOR