
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2025 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) MIEMA, CEnv

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 DECEMBER 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/Z/25/3371060

3 London Street, Chertsey KT16 8AP

- 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 Mr Rajeshkumar Rathinam against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RU.25/0622.
 - The advertisement proposed is a fascia signage and hanging side with external spotlights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have taken the description of the advertisement from the Council's Decision Notice as this is more precise.
4. The appellant has requested permission to submit video evidence to show the advertisements insitu and the context in the local area. However, this was not considered necessary given a site visit was undertaken.
5. The fascia sign and the projecting sign are already present at the appeal property. The appeal is therefore for retrospective express consent.
6. As the appeal relates to a refusal to grant express consent for advertisements, I have had regard to Section 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations). This limits my considerations to those relating to amenity and public safety and regard does not need to be had to the development plan. I have taken the relevant policies into account as a material consideration. However, they have not by themselves been determinative in respect of this appeal.
7. The Council has not raised any objections to the adverts on public or highway safety grounds. Based on the evidence before me and my site visit, I have no reason to reach a contrary view.

Main Issue

8. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity, with particular regard to the character and appearance of the Chertsey Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

9. The appeal relates to a restaurant and takeaway business located in a prominent position on London Street close to the junction with Guildford Street and Windsor Street. This part of London Street is a busy thoroughfare with a number of businesses including shops, cafes, restaurants and a hotel.
10. The appeal property is not listed and although the Council and appellant refer to a local listing designation in the Conservation Area Appraisal document, this status has not been confirmed through inclusion on the local list. The appeal property is however located in the Chertsey CA. In an appeal for advertisement consent in a conservation area, the test from s72(1) of the Act¹ is that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of “preserving or enhancing the character or appearance” of a Conservation Area”. This statutory duty applies in advertisement appeals in so far as it relates to the consideration of ‘amenity’.
11. The CA is relatively large and includes both commercial and residential areas. The appeal property is located centrally within the CA, within an area with a busy historic town centre character. Whilst not immediately neighbouring the appeal property, there are a number of significant and notable historic buildings and monuments close by including St Peter’s Church, the Town or Parish Pump outside St Peter’s Church and Chertsey War Memorial, which are all Grade II* listed and the Old Town Hall which is Grade II listed.
12. The appeal property is two storey and has a commercial use on the ground floor with a business use above. Its frontage is fairly narrow which is typical of the more historic commercial frontages in the area and overall, the building is well proportioned. The fascia sign spans almost the entire width of the appeal property but is positioned slightly off centre. It appears to obscure some of the building’s positive historic architectural detail beneath it. Whilst the appellant has confirmed the previous fascia sign was removed from the building and the current sign complies with national guidance on dimensions; it does appear to project somewhat from the frontage and does not integrate well with the front of the building.
13. I have no issue with the colour palette of the signage, and the sun logo is attractive and proportionate. I also consider that the wording is appropriate to describe the business and the number of words on the fascia sign is not excessive, having observed other commercial signage in the area. However, the positioning and size of lettering of the main restaurant name ‘Dosa Idly Kada’ appears cramped and the modern font style is not in keeping with the character of the CA. With regard to the materials used, I can see from the evidence from the appellant that the signs have been made using aluminium and steel, but these modern materials do not harmonise well with the building. As a result, the scale and size of the font coupled with the materials result in a fascia sign that appears incongruous and discordant on this prominently positioned building and detracts from the appearance of the CA. This harm would increase when the sign is illuminated as it would appear more noticeable.

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

14. With regard to the projecting sign, this is well proportioned and does not dominate the frontage or protrude too far over the pavement. It has a simple design featuring the restaurant's name and logo. Its size and positioning does not feel overbearing and its appearance does not harm the amenity of the area.
15. In respect of the fascia sign I find that it is harmful to the amenity of the area and neither preserves nor enhances the character or appearance of the CA in conflict with Section 72 of the Act. I have had regard to Policies EE1, EE4 and EE5 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (2020) and the Framework which seek, amongst other things to ensure high quality design and protect and avoid harm to heritage assets. As the advert harms amenity, it conflicts with these policies.

Other Matters

16. Whilst I understand the requirement to advertise the business, the current signage is unlikely to be the only means of achieving these objectives. I acknowledge that the appellant has been willing to work with the Council with regard to the repainting of the ground floor of the building and the perceived lack of engagement on the advertisement consent process. Whilst I sympathise, these considerations do not lend any positive weight to the appeal. I also note that the appellant would welcome a condition in relation to periods of illumination of the signage. However, a condition of this nature would not overcome the harm I have found in relation to amenity.
17. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of other businesses in the vicinity with fascia adverts, including the neighbouring Pizza Express, The Crown Hotel and HitSona. I have had regard in this decision to the character of the area which I acknowledge includes a number of businesses with adverts and signage, but I do not have full details of the circumstances that led to the decisions to allow these signs or their planning status. Some of the signage on nearby businesses are not a positive aspect of the character and appearance of the CA, but this is not reason to allow further harmful advertisements.
18. The appellant has also made a number of references to the fascia board for the previous business use, however I have very limited details of the previous signage and the appellant has confirmed this did not have consent. I therefore give it limited weight.
19. The Council's decision does not appear to suggest, as the appellant claims, that well designed signage could not be installed at the premises, and I am of a similar view. The historic consent referred to would suggest that advertisement consent has been previously granted for signage at the property.
20. Matters relating to the impact on the business is not a relevant factor in the consideration of amenity or public safety. Even if it were a relevant factor in an appeal of this nature, there is no evidence to support the position suggested.
21. As far as the Framework is concerned when determining advertisement consent appeals within a conservation area or in relation to a listed building, the question of less than substantial or substantial harm in paragraphs 212 to 215 is not relevant, as the policy only applies to the heritage-related consent regimes under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusion and Recommendation

22. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

23. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR