



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by E Dade BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E5900/Z/25/3366901

150 Mile End Rd, Stepney Green, London E1 4UW

- 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 Jon Fairey on behalf of Explore Learning against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
 - The application Ref is PA/25/00165.
 - The development proposed is internally illuminated built up letters - Advert 1 & 4; internally illuminated projecting sign - Advert 5; digital printed window vinyl graphic - Advert 2 & 3.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the appellant has confirmed the site address on the application form is incorrect, in the header above I have used the address stated on the appeal form.
3. At time of my site visit, Advert 2, Advert 3, and Advert 5, were in situ. Whilst the proposal has been partly implemented, this weighs neither for nor against the proposal which I have determined on the basis of the submitted plans.
4. Section 3.(1) of Part 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the regulations) requires advertising be controlled in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are material, in addition to any other relevant factors. Furthermore, section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special attention 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 which, as stated at regulation 3.(2)(a), includes the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

Main Issue

5. Having regard to the above, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the Stepney Green Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. The appeal proposal relates to a ground floor commercial unit within a tall, modern, mixed-use building at the junction of Mile End Road and Stepney Green.

The site is within the Stepney Green Conservation Area (CA) which encompasses a section of Mile End Road, Stepney Green, and adjoining streets.

7. Mile End Road is a route of historic importance and looking west from the site toward the City of London are distant views of landmark buildings. This section of Mile End Road forms a wide, tree-lined boulevard with a busy, urban character, flanked on either side by a continuous building line of predominantly retail and commercial uses at street-level, but with a mix of other uses, notably education and residential. Buildings are of a mix of architectural styles and ages, including many listed buildings of historic interest which contribute to the area's distinct character. To the southeast of the site, historic terraced dwellings abut the street at Stepney Green, which has a fine grain and residential character.
8. The significance of the CA is derived from the large scale and form of Mile End Road, and the many historic buildings including period dwellings and traditional shop frontages.
9. The commercial unit's elevations to Mile End Road and Stepney Green are extensively glazed, with sliding metal screens offering security and privacy when required. Due to its siting at the junction, the unit is visually prominent in the street scenes of both Mile End Road and Stepney Green.
10. Advert 2 and Advert 3 comprise full height vinyl window coverings which span multiple glazed panels and meet at the front corner of the building. The opaque vinyl advertisements obscure views into the unit from the street, concealing any window display and preventing views across the corner of the unit to the street beyond. Therefore, through covering this section of glazing, Advert 2 and Advert 3 add clutter to this prominent corner frontage. Consequently, the proposal would fail to achieve an active frontage and would not integrate successfully with the public realm, to the detriment of the amenity of the street scene.
11. The illuminated projecting sign (Advert 5) would be acceptable due to its modest size and scale. Advert 1 and Advert 4 would be internally illuminated fascia signs comprising individually illuminated letters set on fitted rails. These would be in the same location as the existing signage and would be of similar design, but of reduced size, to those previously approved and therefore would, at most, have a neutral impact on the visual amenity of the area.
12. Nonetheless, for the reasons set out above, the proposal would harm amenity. It would therefore fail to preserve the character of the CA and would not satisfy the requirements of the Act.
13. In accordance with the regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are relevant. The proposal would conflict with Policy D.DH10 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2020 (THLP) which seeks to ensure advertisements and signage are well-designed and well-integrated with the public realm, host building, and surrounding area, and complement the special character of conservation areas. THLP Policy S.DH3 requires significant weight be given to the protection and enhancement of the borough's conservation areas.
14. Furthermore, the proposal would fail to comply with THLP Policies S.DH1 and D.DH2 which require development meet the highest standards of design and positively contribute to the public realm through optimising active frontages toward public streets and spaces and by reducing visual clutter.

Other Matters

15. The window vinyl advertisements are intended to increase customer awareness of the business and provide a consistent corporate image across its stores. However, this benefit to the business would not outweigh the harms identified above.
16. Within the area surrounding the appeal site are a number of Grade II listed buildings. Nos 107 to 113 Mile End Road date from the early 18th century and comprise a row of terrace dwellings of three storeys and a basement, constructed of brown brick with a parapet, red brick dressings, and rows of sash windows, providing a high degree of uniformity. Nearby on the street there is also a listed drinking fountain. The dwellings and fountain are opposite the appeal site and therefore, collectively, are within the street scene of Mile End Road. However, the wide carriageway provides significant physical and visual separation.
17. To the west of the site are nos 90 to 126 (even) including railings and overthrow at No 102. This early 19th century stock brick terrace with coped parapets and sash windows is of three-storey height. Whilst most units have a ground-floor shopfront projecting toward the street, no 110 has a carriage arch. The appeal site appears relatively distant from nos 90 and 126, separated by intervening units within the modern block.
18. To the southeast of the appeal property at Stepney Green, no 2A is a late-18th century, three-storey, brown brick dwelling with stucco plinth and parapet, and nos 4-10 comprise an early-19th century, three-storey terrace of houses with brown brick and coped parapets. Nos 12-18 are late 18th/early-19th century three-storey terrace of brown brick with coped parapets and red brick window dressings, round headed doorways with stucco architrave, keystone and pilasters, and panelled doors with fanlights. In addition, the terrace row comprising nos 1-19 Stepney Green is locally listed. Whilst there is intervisibility between the side elevation of the appeal property and Stepney Green's listed and locally listed buildings, the junction with Hannibal Road provides physical separation.
19. I have been presented no evidence to suggest the proposal would harm listed or locally listed buildings. As set out above, the listed buildings are of special historic interest due to their age and architectural features. However, features within the street scene provide significant physical and visual separation between the site and surrounding listed buildings. Therefore, I am satisfied the proposal would preserve the listed buildings and their settings and would thus accord with the Act.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

E Dade

INSPECTOR