



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2025

by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/25/3374527

Building 2 At Greenwich Pier, Cutty Sark Gardens, Greenwich SE10 9HT

- 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 Greenwich Pier Lease Ltd against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 25/1556/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of 2no. raised lettering signage, 1no. signboard, 1 no. projecting hanging sign and 1no. projecting hanging ship model display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the installation of 1no. projecting hanging sign.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the installation of 1no. raised lettering signage and 1no. projecting hanging ship model display at Building 2 At Greenwich Pier, Cutty Sark Gardens, Greenwich SE10 9HT in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 25/1556/A, and express consent granted for their display. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issues

3. This appeal follows the Council's split decision on the Application for Consent to Display an Advertisement which approved the raised lettering signage on the southern elevation of the appeal building and the signboard (referred to as the Artwork Signboard by the appellant) on its southern/western elevation. Therefore, this appeal relates only to those advertisements where consent was refused and, for clarity and precision, I refer only to these within my decisions above, namely:
 - 1no raised lettering signage at first floor level on the western elevation (lettering);
 - 1no projecting hanging sign (hanging sign) on the southern elevation; and
 - 1no projecting hanging ship model display (ship model) also on the southern elevation.
4. The appeal documentation indicates that several of the advertisements have been installed and, with regard to the lettering and ship model, I observed this to be the case during my site visit. However, the hanging sign was not in place at the time of my visit. I have, therefore, determined this appeal as proposed, in accordance with the plans submitted with the application for consent.

5. In accordance with the Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Furthermore, any relevant policies within the development plan are not, by themselves, determinative.
6. As the site is located within a conservation area and several listed buildings are nearby, I have had regard to sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act) insofar as they relate to consideration of the effect of the proposal on factors relevant to amenity. As per the Regulations, these factors include the general characteristics of the locality such as the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.
7. Consequently, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area, including the significance of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site (MGWHS) and the Greenwich Park Conservation Area (GPCA); the setting of the Greenwich Palace Scheduled Monument (GPSM)¹, which includes the Old Royal Naval College; and the setting of the Grade I listed Cutty Sark² and the Grade II listed Monument³.

Reasons

8. The appeal site comprises one of a pair of similar, but not identical, pavilion buildings located adjacent to the River Thames, close to Greenwich Pier. The appeal pavilion currently accommodates The Ship public house which, based on the evidence before me, is a reincarnation of the Ship Tavern, a former hostelry that has a lengthy association in this area, having originally been located on the site now occupied by the dry dock of the Grade I listed Cutty Sark.
9. The site is located within the MGWHS, an area internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), indicating its importance as a heritage asset of the highest significance. Extending from the river to just beyond the most southerly boundary of Greenwich Park, the MGWHS has a significant number of attributes the WHS Management Plan⁴ identifies as contributing features to its OUV. Collectively, these attributes underpin the significance of the MGWHS. Those most pertinent to this appeal, given their proximity to the site, include: the architectural ensemble, or Grand Axis, of the Queen's House, Royal Observatory, Royal Hospital and The Royal Park; the longstanding Royal patronage of the area; the area's relationship with the River Thames; and the silhouettes of the Cutty Sark and the baroque buildings comprising the Old Royal Naval College (the College).
10. Covering a similar, yet smaller, area than the MGWHS, the GPCA encompasses the appeal site, the College and Greenwich Park. It also overlaps with the Greenwich Palace Scheduled Monument (GPSM) which includes many buildings and structures that are listed in their own right, such as those within the grounds of the College. The special interest of the GPCA and the GPSM, therefore, also relates to the WGWH's aforementioned attributes of OUV, as well as its historical and architectural significance. Of relevance to this appeal, these are derived from

¹ List Entry no: 1410710; date first listed 22 March 2013

² List Entry no: 1079013; date first listed 8 June 1973

³ War Monument to Officers and men who fell in New Zealand Campaign 1863-64 (at north east part of College Grounds); List Entry no: 1078923; date first listed 8 June 1973

⁴ Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan (the WHS Management Plan)

the College grounds being the site of a former Tudor Royal Palace which was the birthplace of Henry VII, Mary and Elizabeth I, in addition to the special architectural interest of the buildings within the Grand Axis and their arrangement within the formal grounds.

11. The Cutty Sark is a former tea clipper sailing ship built in 1869 to voyage to China as part of the tea trade, although it also played a role in the Australian wool trade. However, its operation and role within the worldwide trading of goods is just one aspect of its special historic interest. With the increased popularity of steamships and the expansion of trading routes, the demand for sailing ships such as the Cutty Sark dwindled, despite its speed. Changes in the ownership during the twentieth century did not prevent the condition of the Cutty Sark from deteriorating due to poor weather conditions and neglect.
12. The ship's subsequent restorations have, however, resulted in the ship becoming world renowned and a significant feature alongside the River Thames and, now part of a museum, is synonymous with Greenwich and London. Its dry dock setting, within a spacious plaza signifies its importance as a landmark, a cultural heritage asset and tourist destination, all of which underpin the Cutty's Sark's special interest and contribute to the significance of the area, including the MGWHS.
13. The Grade II listed Monument is also located close to the appeal site, within the grounds of the College. It comprises a tall granite obelisk standing on a squared stepped plinth. Its height and location demonstrates its importance as a focal point to commemorate those who died during the 1863-1864 campaign of the New Zealand Wars. The special historic interest of the Monument, derived from its commemorative focus, is best appreciated from a short distance away within the College grounds, thereby enabling the inscription in the granite to be read. In the wider surroundings, the Monument's grey colour means it does not compete with the larger landmarks in the area and, despite its height, is predominantly lost against the backdrop of mature trees which line the boundary of the College grounds with the walkway and Cutty Sark plaza.
14. The siting of the Greenwich Pier pavilions a short distance away from the Cutty Sark allows the ship to be experienced from locations close to the River Thames, whilst ensuring a visual connection between it and the water. Whilst having a more modern appearance, due to the use of wooden panelling and glass, materials which reflect that of the Cutty Sark and its enclosed museum, and their curved design, neither pavilion compete with the ship as a landmark feature nor intrude upon its setting.
15. The design of the proposed hanging sign incorporates an illustration of a ship painted on wood. It would be fixed just below the letter 'P' in the approved raised lettering signage on the appeal building's southern elevation, projecting towards the College grounds. Against the dark wooden panelling and the more modern design of the appeal building, the solid white background of the sign would be highly prominent. This would particularly be the case in views along the adjacent walkway which follows the river and also in the background of some views of the Cutty Sark. Furthermore, views from the Cutty Sark and the hanging sign would be possible, albeit at various oblique angles, particularly during winter months when the mature trees within the grounds of the College are bare.

16. As similarly concluded by another Inspector⁵, the hanging sign's traditional style would be at odds with the more modern design, features and materials of the appeal pavilion. It would also be experienced in the same view as the ship model and, from some angles, screen it. The result would be the introduction of an incongruent and obvious visual clutter to the southern elevation of the appeal building. As such, this would be detrimental to the amenity of the area, including the setting of the Cutty Sark and the significance of the MGWHS as a whole. Given the overlapping significance and special interest with the MGWHS, it follows that the hanging sign would also harm the GPCA and the setting of the GPSM, including the Monument, in this respect.
17. The ship model would also project from the appeal building, albeit at a slightly higher level and close to the fully glazed section of the southern elevation. Comprising a model of a sailing ship which, along with the array of other model ships on display in the appeal pavilion's windows, would pay homage to the historic context of the area, including the Cutty Sark. Its dark colours would complement both the wooden panelling and dark glazing of this elevation of the pavilion. Moreover, given its height and the gaps between the model's sails, the vista along the walkway would be maintained. Despite its scale and outward projection, unlike the hanging sign, the colours of the model ship would not jar against the external appearance of the appeal building, thereby preserving the significance of the MGWHS and the GPCA, and the setting of the GPSM and nearby listed buildings.
18. The proposed raised 'THE SHIP' lettering on the western elevation would comprise the same material and colour as the approved, and now installed, raised lettering on the southern elevation. Although fixed to a different external material to those incorporated into the southern elevation, the dull gold colour of the proposed lettering would subtly contrast with the brown coloured blocks in the wall. Given the pavilions are not symmetrical nor twins, the installation of the lettering would not be detrimental to or unbalance the relationship between the two buildings.
19. Lettering creating the 'THE' would wrap around onto the northern elevation of the pavilion and would, therefore be visible within an important strategic view (river approach) and an important local view identified within the MGWHS Management Plan. However, due to their colour, modest height, shallow depth and positioning following the curve of the pavilion, the lettering would not be prominent within either view. For the same reasons, it would not intrude on the appreciation of the significance of the MGWHS and the GPCA, or the setting of the GPSM and nearby listed buildings.
20. As it is located closest to the appeal site, there are places within the College grounds where the hanging sign and the ship model would be visible within the same views of the Monument. However, due to their perpendicular fixing to the appeal pavilion, this would primarily comprise the ends, rather than the opposing branded faces, of the signs. Therefore, combined with the manner in which the Monument is best experienced, neither the hanging sign nor the ship model would be harmful to the setting of the Grade II listed Monument.

⁵ APP/E5330/Z/24/3348055

21. Also nearby are the Grade II listed Entrance Building to Greenwich Footway Tunnel⁶ and a Grade II listed K6 Telephone Kiosk⁷, both of which contribute to the historical significance of Greenwich, the River Thames and the MGWHS. Given their location with various built form, structures and street furniture between these listed buildings and the appeal site, and, in the case of the Kiosk, its scale, I find that the proposal would not harm the setting of either heritage asset.
22. Nonetheless, I conclude that the proposal, insofar as it relates to the hanging sign, would harm the amenity of the area, including the significance of the MGWHS and the setting of the Grade I listed Cutty Sark, contrary to the Regulations. It would also conflict with policies D3, HC1 and HC2 of the London Plan 2021 (London Plan) and policies DH1, DH3, DH4 and DH of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (Local Plan) insofar as they seek to protect amenity and the local character of an area.
23. It would also be contrary to s66(1) of the Act. Taking into account the small scale of the hanging sign against the highest status of significance of the MGWHS, it is my judgement that the magnitude of this harm would be modest. Similarly, the harm to the setting of the Cutty Sark would be low.
24. Whilst the intention of the hanging sign is to signify the location of The Ship, thereby promoting its use as a public house, thereby supporting the local economy and the wider tourist destination, as other signage, including those already approved by the Council, also fulfil this role, the necessity for the hanging is minimal. On this basis, the public benefits which would be derived from this part of the proposal would be insufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified above.
25. Consequently, I conclude that the hanging sign would harm the amenity of the area, including the significance of the MGWHS and the GPCA, and the setting of the GPSM and nearby listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Cutty Sark and the Grade II listed Monument.
26. With specific regard to the lettering and ship model, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the amenity of the area, including the significance of the MGWHS and the GPCA, as well as the setting of the GPSM and several listed buildings. Therefore, they accord with the Regulations and the aforementioned policies of the London Plan and the Local Plan.

Conclusion

27. For the reasons given above and having regard to all relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the lettering and ship model signage. To the extent that it relates to the hanging sign, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Juliet Rogers

INSPECTOR

⁶ List Entry No: 1289371; date first listed: 26 June 1975

⁷ List Entry No: 1394456; date first listed 12 October 2000