



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2026

by Ann Veevers BA(Hons) PGDip(BCon) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/25/3374109

14-16 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL

- 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 Ms Laura Scholes of Urban Vision against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/06062/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is printed vinyl scaffold shroud with 1:1 scale depiction of building elevation and 3x inset advertisement measuring 5.5m x 5.5m
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the application form. Although different to that on the decision notice, no confirmation that a change was agreed has been provided.
3. Powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) shall be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as material, and any other relevant factors. Since the appeal was submitted, the Council has adopted the City Plan 2019-2040, January 2026 (CP). This has superseded the City Plan 2019-2040, April 2021. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the new policies insofar as they are a material consideration.
4. 14-16 Cockspur Street is a Grade II listed building¹ and is within a conservation area. While the statutory duty under s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) relating to listed buildings and their settings does not apply, the duty under s72(1) of the Act to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area does apply insofar as it relates to the consideration of amenity. This is because the courts have held that in conservation area cases s72 applies to the exercise of functions under the planning acts² but s66(1) only applies to a grant of planning permission.

¹ National Heritage List for England, List Entry number:1356947

² R. (on the application of Clear Channel UK Ltd) v First Secretary of State, R (on the application of Clear Channel UK Ltd) v Islington LDC [2004] EWHC 2483

5. Nevertheless, the Regulations set out that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest³. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) similarly explains, if the locality where an advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, consideration should be given to whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features⁴. I have had regard to these factors and have determined the appeals accordingly.

Main Issue

6. The Council has concluded that the proposed advertisements would be acceptable in terms of public safety and, from the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on visual amenity, with particular regard to designated heritage assets.

Reasons

Designated heritage assets

7. At the time of my site visit, the front elevation of 14-16 Cockspur Street (the appeal building) was covered in scaffold and plain sheeting with solid timber boarding extending onto the pavement and covering the ground floor. Nonetheless, from the evidence before me, the 5-storey plus double mansard roof appeal building was constructed of Portland stone in the early 20th century as the headquarters for the Hamburg-America Shipping Line. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal, I consider the significance and special interest of the appeal building largely derive from its historic and architectural interest. Important contributors in these regards are the building's surviving historic fabric, including its fine architectural detailing and composition.
8. Significance is also derived, in part, from the appeal building's setting within a row of other listed buildings of similar height. It faces towards the junction of Cockspur Street, Pall Mall East and Haymarket and a small triangular paved area formed by the intersection of roads and which also includes several trees and a statue. The setting of the appeal building includes this signalised road junction and surrounding historic buildings, which, from the limited evidence before me and what I saw, include the Grade II listed Statue of King George III; Grade II listed 17-19 Cockspur Street and 20 Cockspur Street; Grade II listed 125 Pall Mall; and Grade II listed New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket.
9. The appeal building's position amongst these historic buildings and adjacent to the splayed corner facing Haymarket provides a focal point in views of the junction, in particular when approaching towards Pall Mall along Haymarket. The pleasing historic architectural coherence of the row and generally clutter-free façades of surrounding buildings make a positive contribution to the setting of the appeal building.
10. The St James's Conservation Area (CA) within which the appeal building sits has a very high concentration of designated heritage assets and is located in the heart of the city centre between The Mall and Piccadilly. The area includes an array of architecturally designed elaborate buildings and monuments of high status. The

³ Regulation 3(2)

⁴ Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306

predominant use of Portland stone and general consistency of height of buildings along the main thoroughfares provides an overarching visual harmony to the area.

11. The CA is largely commercial, including retail and restaurant uses at ground floor with offices above and an array of members clubs. There are also several cultural facilities in the area including the Hungarian Cultural Centre and the Embassy of Kazakhstan either side of the appeal building as well as theatres along Haymarket. In part and insofar as is relevant to this appeal, I find the significance of the CA mainly derives from the exemplar architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings which contribute to the city's historic townscape as well as their vibrant cultural and commercial functions.
12. Given its prominent location and contribution to the development of this part of the city as a result of its age, architectural details and historic commercial use, along with its group value as part of the listed row, the appeal building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. This in turn contributes in a positive way to the significance of the CA and the ability to appreciate that significance.
13. Advertising within the CA, particularly around its eastern extent where the appeal building sits, mostly consists of low-level, small-scale signage that is associated with the ground floor shopfronts. While there are several national flags on embassy buildings in the CA, because signage is generally contained to the ground floor level, it allows for the detailing on the upper floors of historic façades of the listed buildings to be appreciated.
14. I note the appeal building is also located within Westminster's Central Activities Zone and faces towards the West End Retail and Special Policy Area and West End Cultural Area.

Assessment

15. Advertisement consent is sought for the display of a printed vinyl mesh scaffold shroud measuring 25m x 23.5m covering all the front elevation of the building above the ground floor. It would display a pencil sketch 1:1 image of the building, a colour image of the Brazilian flag, and three horizontally aligned, non-illuminated inset advertisements positioned at first and second floor level, each measuring 5.5m x 5.5m. The application form states advertisement consent is sought for a temporary period whilst renovation works to the building are undertaken.
16. PPG⁵ confirms that buildings which are being renovated or are undergoing major structural work and which have scaffolding or netting around them may be considered suitable as temporary sites for shroud advertisements or large 'wrap' advertisements covering the face, or part of the face, of the building.
17. In this case, the shroud with a facsimile of the building would enhance the appearance of the existing scaffolding and plain shroud that covers the front façade. It would also allow continued appreciation of the architectural form and merits of the building during the period of renovation works.
18. However, despite the appellant's claim that the inset advertisements would only cover 15% of the building's façade, their size and position above ground floor would be out of keeping with the generally uncluttered upper floors of buildings in

⁵ Paragraph 18b-005-20140306

the surrounding area. Indeed, the appellant accepts there is limited commercial signage in the immediate area. At this level, bright coloured displays on the inset advertisements would draw the eye and dominate the façade of the appeal building and detract from the architectural quality of buildings in the row as a whole.

19. Trees would screen the advertisements in some views from Pall Mall East during the months when leaves would be on the trees. However, due to the angle of Cockspur Street relative to Pall Mall East, at my site visit in January when leaves were not on the trees, I was able to clearly see the appeal building's façade when approaching from the National Portrait Gallery to the east. Even if none of the important views identified in the Council's St James's Conservation Area Audit are directed towards the appeal building, this does not mean visual harm in other views would be acceptable.
20. Direct views of the inset advertisements would also be obtainable from Haymarket, where the appeal building terminates the view at its junction with Pall Mall East and Cockspur Street. As a result of their position and scale, they would be a highly intrusive and incongruous feature in the surrounding historic streetscape and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
21. The proposed inset advertisements would be reduced in overall size, separated into three distinct parts and positioned at lower level on the shroud in relation to a previous application for advertisement consent sought at the site which was refused by the Council⁶. Unlike that case, the proposed advertisements would not be illuminated. Nevertheless, in combination, the inset advertisement would still be large-scale, almost covering the width of the building over two floors. Moreover, the proportions of the sign would not align with sketch window openings on the shroud. Openings on the building have a vertical emphasis whereas the inset advertisements would have a square-like horizontal emphasis. This would prevent an observer from appreciating the overall appearance and symmetry of the building depicted by the sketch image of the building beneath.
22. Although traditional scaffolding and shroud materials are not an unusual temporary feature in this busy location, and the pencil sketched shroud alone would be acceptable, the proposed inset advertisements would have a detrimental effect upon the visual amenity of the area. The temporary nature of the proposed advertisements would lessen the resulting harm to amenity; however, this would not sufficiently mitigate the harm that would endure throughout the duration of the display of the advertisements.
23. The appellant has advised that the inset advertisements would be used for commercial advertising and to promote the 200th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Brazil and the United Kingdom. Given there is no mechanism before me to secure this, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed advertisement's display can be restricted in this way. In any event, there would still be commercial advertising.
24. I conclude that the proposed inset advertisements, even for a temporary period, would be harmful to visual amenity, with particular regard to designated heritage assets.

⁶ Westminster City Council Ref: 25/04180/ADV

25. Consequently, it would not accord with Policies 41, 42 and 48 of the CP, insofar as they are relevant. These policies, in part, seek to require that all development positively contributes to Westminster's townscape and streetscape; preserves or enhances the character and appearance of Westminster's conservation areas; that heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance; and that advertisements make a positive contribution to amenity.

Other Matters

26. The appellant has referred to other shroud advertisements in the area that have been approved by the Council, or at appeal. Notably, there are some similarities between the shroud at 20 Cockspur Street (No.20) and the appeal proposal insofar as No.20 is a listed building within the same row. I have been provided with a copy of the appeal decision relating to that site. I note that a factor weighing in favour of that appeal was that the scheme was identical to a previous advertisement consent granted by the Council. Furthermore, No.20 is located at the end of the row on a narrower façade than would be the case on the appeal building.
27. The example at London Pavillion is located in Piccadilly Circus, in proximity to a very large curved digital display and therefore the building's setting is materially different to that in this appeal. The example given at New Zealand House is also materially different insofar as the advertisement relates to theatre shows and the building upon which it is located is significantly taller. Whilst I'm unaware of the specific circumstances relating to the advertisement shrouds at South Moulton Street and New Bond Street, given the predominantly narrow pedestrianised features of these streets and the number of ground floor retail units, the surrounding of these examples are significantly different from the appeal proposal. I note the appellant also confirms the appeal site is located within a different environment to these examples.
28. As such, the circumstances of the examples put to me are not sufficiently similar to this appeal to weigh in its favour. Moreover, the fact that apparently similar development has been granted permission is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.
29. The appellant has made other arguments in support of the proposal, including that it presents an opportunity to embrace a viable advertising location, that it would subsidise works to the listed building that have already been agreed with the Council, and there would be an economic benefit. However, no robust evidence is before me to support these claims. Regardless, matters not relating to amenity and public safety fall outside the scope of this appeal, as defined in the Regulations. As such, these factors do not provide justification for allowing a proposal which would be harmful to amenity for the reasons set out above.
30. Similarly, the claim by the appellant that the proposed advertisement would help to contain dust has not been substantiated nor has it been set out why this benefit could not apply to a plain or facsimile shroud. My attention has also been drawn by the appellant to the alternatives of having no screening of the scaffolding, or screening by netting or a plain shroud during renovation works. Whilst it would be visually preferable to have a shroud which contained only a facsimile of the

building beneath, I saw the current plain shroud around the front elevation of the building would be less visually harmful than the proposal.

Conclusion

31. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters, the appeal should be dismissed.

Ann Veevers

INSPECTOR