



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 March 2026

by F P Tinsley MA (Hons) MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 May 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/Z/23/3319089

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- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (Advertising Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs. Serpil Ersan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application reference is Ref: 22/04321/ADV
 - The development is 'Installation of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. This appeal relates to the display of an advertisement that has already commenced. As the application is therefore retrospective, I have considered the submission accordingly.
3. The Government has published revised versions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) since submission of the appeal including the current version of the Framework published on 12 December 2024. I have had regard to this as a material consideration. The issues most relevant to this appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Main Issue

4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) sets out that powers under those 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 they are material, and any other relevant factors.
5. The main issue in the appeal is therefore the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises a three-storey mid-terrace building located on the eastern side of Southgate Circus. The application relates to a ground floor

commercial unit within the Southgate District Centre, an area characterised by commercial uses at ground floor level with residential accommodation above. The building is not statutorily listed; however, it is situated within the Southgate Circus Conservation Area (CA).

7. In determining an appeal for advertisement consent within a CA, regard must be had to the statutory duty set out in section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. This duty is engaged in advertisement appeals insofar as it relates to the assessment of amenity, which is the principal matter for consideration in this case.
8. Southgate Circus is a distinctive townscape, with the underground station forming a key architectural and visual focal point. The appeal site occupies a prominent position, facing onto and forming part of the Circus. Whilst the upper levels of the surrounding building group are relatively uniform in appearance, there is a marked lack of consistency at ground floor level. The proliferation of varied shopfront designs has eroded the overall character and appearance of the area. This issue is identified in the Southgate Circus Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2015), which notes at paragraph 2.4.19 that: "The distinct architectural style of the Broadway has been eroded by poor quality modern shop fronts."
9. A range of approaches to shopfront illumination is evident in the vicinity of the site; however, observations during the site visit indicate that internally illuminated signage of the type installed is not characteristic of the area. For example, the recently refurbished Merkur Slots unit to the north, which is the most prominent unit in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, utilises pin-mounted, externally illuminated signage.
10. The signage, as erected, measures approximately 9 metres in width, 0.9 metres in height and 0.1 metres in depth. It comprises individual letters and a logo, internally illuminated by LED modules, with illumination provided both within the primary lettering and behind stencil-cut elements for smaller text.
11. By virtue of its scale, but more significantly its method of internal illumination, the advertisement appears as an isolated, dominant and visually intrusive feature within the street scene. The internal illumination gives rise to a stark and overly prominent appearance, which is at odds with the more restrained character of signage typically found within the CA.
12. No substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate how the signage would contribute positively to the visual amenity of the area. In my view, the design fails to respect the architectural qualities of the host building and does not constitute good design. Although similar forms of signage may be found elsewhere, this does not justify its use in this sensitive location. The signage neither integrates with its surroundings nor contributes to the creation of an attractive, welcoming or coherent environment for those who live, work and visit the area.
13. I have had regard to Policy DMD41 of the Development Management Document (2014), which indicates that internally illuminated signs, box fascias and projecting box signs are unlikely to be acceptable within CAs. In addition, paragraph 141 of the Framework advises that poorly sited or designed advertisements can harm the quality and character of places. In this instance, the signage is unsympathetic to its

context and would result in harm to visual amenity, thereby conflicting with both local and national policy.

14. A number of other examples of signage have been brought to my attention. However, the information provided in respect of these examples is limited and does not adequately explain their context or planning background. In any event, the characteristics of each location will differ, and it has not been demonstrated that these examples are directly comparable to the circumstances of the appeal site. As such, whilst they attract limited weight, they do not alter my assessment of the signage before me.
15. The signage fails to satisfy the statutory duty set out in section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as it does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
16. I conclude that the signage results in unacceptable harm to amenity. The internal illumination renders the signage unduly dominant and visually intrusive, contributing to unnecessary advertisement clutter within the CA.

Other Matters

17. I find that the signage does not give rise to any harm to public safety. Furthermore, there would be no adverse impact on the living conditions of nearby residential occupiers and, as such, no harm to residential amenity is identified. As such, this is a neutral benefit and does not alter my assessment of the signage.
18. Reference has been made to a number of development plan policies, including those within the London Plan (2021) - Policies D4 (Delivering good design), D8 (Public Realm), 7.4 (Local Character), 7.6 (Architecture) and HC1 (Heritage conservation and growth); the Enfield Core Strategy 2010–2025 - Policies CP30 (Maintaining and Improving the Quality of the Built and Open Environment) and CP31 (Built and Landscape Heritage); and the Development Management Document - Policies DMD37 (Achieving High Quality and Design-Led Development) and DMD44 (Preserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets).
19. However, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate how the signage complies with, or is supported by, these policies. Having considered the matter, I find no clear or convincing justification to conclude that the signage accords with the aims and objectives of the aforementioned policies.
20. I have not been provided with any evidence to demonstrate that the signage optimises the potential of the site. In any event, such considerations fall outside the scope of this determination, which is limited to matters of amenity and public safety in the context of advertisement consent, and therefore is not afforded material weight.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above I conclude that the display of the advertisement is detrimental to the interests of amenity, therefore the appeal is dismissed.

F P Tinsley

INSPECTOR