



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2026

by F Cullen BA(Hons) MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 July 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/25/3377097

10 Piccadilly, City of Westminster, London W1J 0DD

- 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 The Crown Estate against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/06290/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'Display of 1:1 printed image of building and 3x externally illuminated advertising areas measuring 18m x 8m on Piccadilly, Piccadilly Circus 18.4m x 7.5m on Piccadilly Circus and 14.72m x 8m on Regent Street shroud for a temporary period of two years.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations), the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) all confirm that control over the display of advertisements should only be in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.
3. The Council has raised no concerns regarding public safety. I have no reason to take a different view. I have therefore focused my considerations of the appeal on the effects of the proposal on amenity. 'Amenity' is not defined exhaustively in the Regulations. It includes aural and visual amenity¹, and factors relevant to amenity cover the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest². Additionally, the PPG advises that, in practice, 'amenity' is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement or site for the display of advertisements, where residents or passers-by will be aware of the advertisement³.
4. During the determination of the appeal, the City of Westminster Council adopted the City Plan Partial Review / City Plan 2019-2040 on 21 January 2026 (the City Plan 2026). This supersedes the City Plan 2021. From the information provided, only the numbers of the policies cited by the Council in its Decision Notice have

¹ Regulation 2(1).

² Regulation 3(2)(a).

³ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306.

changed⁴, not their wording, nor the wording of their supporting text. I am satisfied that no prejudice would arise from me taking the relevant policies of the City Plan 2026, in so far as they are material, into account in my determination of the appeal, and have proceeded on this basis.

5. The appeal property forms part of a Grade II listed building which is located within the settings of nearby Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings. As the appeal does not concern whether to grant planning permission, the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act) does not apply. Nevertheless, the above are relevant factors in the context of considering the effect of the proposal on amenity. The appeal site is also located within a conservation area. As the appeal concerns the exercise of planning functions within a conservation area, the statutory duty under section 72(1) of the Act does apply, and I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in the context of considering the effect of the proposal on amenity.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area, having regard to the host listed building, the settings of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Regent Street Conservation Area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property occupies a highly prominent position within the street scene, possessing three principal elevations fronting onto Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus and Piccadilly. It is a Grade II listed building known as The Quadrant⁵, which is part of Sir Reginald Blomfield's grandiose rebuilding of Nash's Quadrant, designed from circa 1910 and completed 1920-23.
8. Several listed buildings dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries lie proximate to the appeal site. Those referenced in the Council's reason for refusal are the Grade II* listed Piccadilly Hotel⁶; the Grade II listed The Quadrant⁷; the Grade II listed The Quadrant⁸; the Grade II listed 14 and 15 Jermyn Street SW1, 27-37 Lower Regent Street SW1, 217 Piccadilly W1⁹; the Grade II listed 215 and 216 Piccadilly W1¹⁰; the Grade II listed 207-209 Piccadilly W1¹¹; and the Grade II* listed Simpsons¹².
9. The special interest and significance of these designated heritage assets are primarily derived from their historic and architectural interests in being fine examples of late 19th and early 20th century grand architecture and, with the

⁴ Policy 38 is now Policy 42 Design principles; Policy 39 is now Policy 44 Westminster's heritage; Policy 40 is now Policy 45 Townscape and architecture; and Policy 43(G) is now Policy 48(G) Public realm.

⁵ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1235117, comprising 9-18 Piccadilly W1, and The Quadrant, 49-63 Regent Street W1.

⁶ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1265754, comprising 1-5 Air Street; Piccadilly Hotel, 21-31 and 31A Piccadilly; and Piccadilly Hotel 65-81 Regent Street.

⁷ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1265195, comprising The Quadrant 83-89 Regent Street W1; The Quadrant 89A Regent Street W1; and The Quadrant 91-113 Regent Street W1.

⁸ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1227631, comprising 14-18 Quadrant Arcade W1; 15A Air Street W1; 5-17 Quadrant Arcade W1; 52-100 Regent Street W1; 9, 19, 27 and 29 Glasshouse Street W1; and The Quadrant 74A Regent Street W1.

⁹ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1274532.

¹⁰ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1265752.

¹¹ National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1265806.

¹² National Heritage List for England. List Entry Number: 1226639, comprising Simpsons 203-206 Piccadilly W1 and Simpsons 30 Jermyn Street SW1.

exception of 'Simpsons', their value as part of a group. Of those with 'Group Value', their imposing scale, set-piece composition and design, and elaborate detailing, using a common palette of materials of Portland stone and slate, present an impressive townscape. Whilst being a later building dating from 1935-6 and restrained in its form and design, 'Simpsons' maintains Piccadilly's grandeur and quality in its scale, construction and historic use.

10. Pertinent to the appeal, the special interest and significance of these assets also stem, in part, from their settings. The listed buildings are primarily experienced from the immediately adjacent roads, footpaths, open spaces, and historic built backdrop, which together form this busy city centre environment. These planned routes, formal spaces and heritage context positively contribute to both their significance as designated heritage assets, as well as the ability to appreciate their significance.
11. The site is located within the southern part of Regent Street Conservation Area (the RSCA). In respect of the appeal, the main characteristics of the RSCA which positively support its special interest and significance, are its historic street pattern, and the richness, quality and formal composition of its historic buildings in predominantly retail and commercial uses. This context, whilst being sensitive to change in heritage terms, provides for a vibrant and bustling atmosphere, as well as an abundance and diversity of associated signage and advertisements, particularly around the adjacent distinctive landmark of Piccadilly Circus.
12. The historic integrity, architectural quality and formal settings of the aforementioned listed buildings, contribute positively to the character and appearance of the RSCA as a whole, and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
13. This is recognised, in part, in the Council's Metropolitan Views Draft Supplementary Planning Document, 2007 (Views Draft SPD). Metropolitan View 27 takes in the vista from Regent Street to Piccadilly, which incorporates the Regent Street frontage of the appeal property. View 27 highlights the importance of controlling signage within the 'middleground' to enhance the architectural unity of the buildings and avoid disrupting the view.
14. The Council's Westminster's Streets and Spaces, Public Realm Guidance Supplementary Planning Document, 2025 (Streets and Spaces SPD) provides broad guidance on 'signs and adverts' as well as detailed guidance on 'shrouds'¹³. Whilst being generally restrictive in the control of advertisements above ground floor on shrouds, some flexibility and judgement in relation to the merits and circumstances of each case are incorporated into the 'principles'.
15. I am also aware of guidance on advertisements, including those on shrouds, within the Framework¹⁴ and the PPG¹⁵.
16. The appeal property is programmed to undergo comprehensive external and internal refurbishment, which has been granted planning permission and listed building consent. As part of this, temporary scaffolding is to be erected around the

¹³ 8.3 Signs and Adverts.

¹⁴ National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 141.

¹⁵ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 18b-005-20140306.

building for the duration of the development and works, stated to be from March 2026 to November 2027¹⁶. No scaffolding was in place at the time of my site visit.

17. The proposal seeks advertisement consent for a period of two years for the display of a shroud / building wrap to cover the scaffolding on the Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus and Piccadilly elevations, incorporating a 1:1 trompe l'oeil printed image of the building and three integral inset advertisement zones. The inset zones would measure 14.72m x 8m on the Regent Street elevation, 18.4m x 7.5m on the Piccadilly Circus elevation and 18m x 8m on the Piccadilly elevation; and would be externally illuminated by LED units from above, six on Regent Street, eight on Piccadilly Circus and eight on Piccadilly. The inset zones would be used for a period of 42 weeks per year, and the inset zone facing Piccadilly would be used for what is described as 'Social Value Media Space'.
18. The location and form of the building within the townscape means that, to a large extent, the three principal elevations are experienced and appreciated separately or just two together¹⁷. Although medium range views looking west from Coventry Street permit the building as a whole to be discerned, a combined appreciation of the Piccadilly Circus elevation and the full extent of the elevations on Regent Street and Piccadilly is still restricted. These constraints have implications for how the proposal would be perceived by residents or passers-by, and any consequent effects on the amenity of the area.
19. The Council has raised no issues with the proposed 1:1 trompe l'oeil printed building wrap, stating that it would have a 'neutral impact on amenity and public safety'. I have no reason to reach a different conclusion on this matter and find that it would be of a high quality and, of the areas it is proposed to cover, would maintain the character and appearance of the area's distinctive townscape during the approved refurbishment of the property. Indeed, it would be preferable to the alternative of an expanse of plain Monarflex material covering the scaffolding.
20. The proposed inset advertisement zones would each be sizeable and, combined with their elevated positions at second and third floor levels, would cause them to be prominent features on the elevations and within the townscape. The evidence indicates that, collectively, the inset zones would cover only about 20% of the total building wrap, with the remaining 80% being the proposed depiction of the building.
21. This 'proportionality' of inset advertisement zone to building wrap would be readily apparent on the Regent Street and Piccadilly elevations. Although the inset zones would partly conceal the host building's façades without replicating them, their relative subordinate scale would mean that they would not unduly impair an appreciation of the building wrap's high quality representation, and would still allow the architectural harmony of the host building and surrounding townscape to be understood.
22. However, this would not be the case on the Piccadilly Circus elevation. Although centrally positioned within this façade, the inset zone could not reasonably be described as minimal advertising content, and would not be a modest nor proportionate addition within the building wrap in this location. In covering a considerable part of the wrap's depiction of the building's Piccadilly Circus façade,

¹⁶ Appellant's Grounds of Appeal para 3.12.

¹⁷ The Regent Street and Piccadilly Circus elevations, and the Piccadilly Circus and Piccadilly elevations.

it would overwhelm the high quality representation and diminish the appreciation of the architectural quality of the host building within this historic built context. This would harm the amenity of the area having regard to the host listed building and the settings of nearby listed buildings.

23. The peripheral position of the inset zone on the Regent Street façade would mean that any advertisement would not be predominantly perceived in conjunction with that proposed on the Piccadilly Circus elevation. However, the proposed location of the inset advertisement zone on the Piccadilly façade would result in it being largely read in combination with that proposed on the Piccadilly Circus elevation, exacerbating the collective dominance and cumulative impact of these advertisement zones on the building wrap and within the street scene. That said, of these two inset zones, I am mindful that the one facing Piccadilly is stated by the appellant to be 'Social Value Media Space', which would advertise 'social value initiatives and partnerships'. Although this is not expanded upon, it is reasonable to conclude that this display would comply with the shroud 'principles' as stated in the Council's Streets and Spaces SPD.
24. The proposed external illumination would give additional prominence to all of the inset advertisement zones during early morning and night-time, particularly in the Autumn and Winter months. However, I am cognisant of the illuminated nature of buildings and spaces in the adjacent Piccadilly Circus area. Against this well-lit and visually vibrant backdrop, the number of units would not be excessive, and the imposition of appropriately worded conditions relating to the timing, intensity and nature of the illumination would adequately mitigate any potential adverse effects.
25. However, the acceptability of the proposed external illumination would not offset the harm I have identified above in respect of the inset advertisement zone on the Piccadilly Circus elevation and the amenity of the area.
26. The proposed scaffolding building wrap and inset advertisement zones would undoubtedly be conspicuous within the townscape and readily apparent when viewed from adjacent public routes, spaces and buildings. In relation to the wrap and inset zones proposed on the Regent Street and Piccadilly elevations, given their specific detail, in conjunction with the area's intrinsic commercial character and vibrant appearance and atmosphere, they would not appear as wholly incongruous nor unduly assertive, but instead designed with regard to their context. On the whole and mindful of their temporary nature which would be evident to passers-by, the harmony of the townscape's distinctive formal composition and Metropolitan View 27 would be maintained. On this basis, the building wrap and integral inset advertisement zones proposed on the Regent Street and Piccadilly elevations would preserve the character and appearance of the RSCA as a whole.
27. However, even when taking the area's unique character and general context into account, the inset zone within the proposed wrap on the Piccadilly Circus façade would appear excessively dominant and thus discordant on this elevation of the building.
28. I have had regard to the other large advertisements on buildings in the vicinity cited by the appellant which have been allowed on appeal. These include permanent digital displays, as well as temporary externally illuminated shroud advertisement zones which are larger than that before me. Even so, the

Framework is clear in stating that the cumulative impacts of advertisements should be taken into account in decision making. In this instance, the further addition of a large-scale inset advertisement zone on the Piccadilly Circus elevation, when read collectively with the other approved advertisements, would be harmful to the amenity of the area. In this respect, the inset advertisement zone proposed on the Piccadilly Circus elevation would not preserve the character and appearance of the RSCA as a whole.

29. Neither the time-limited nature of the proposal, nor the imposition of a condition requiring the approval of the detail of any inset advertisement on the Piccadilly Circus elevation, would satisfactorily mitigate the identified harmful effects resulting from its large-scale and cumulative impact. Furthermore, I am not persuaded that such a condition would meet the tests of necessity or reasonableness.
30. Drawing all of the above together, I find that the proposed scaffolding shroud / building wrap with a 1:1 trompe l'oeil printed image of the building as shown on the Regent Street, Piccadilly and Piccadilly Circus elevations and externally illuminated inset advertisements on the Regent Street and Piccadilly elevations, would not harm the amenity of the area, having regard to the host listed building, the settings of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the RSCA.
31. Nevertheless, I find that the proposed externally illuminated inset advertisement zone on the Piccadilly Circus elevation would harm the amenity of the area, having regard to the host listed building, the settings of nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the RSCA. On this basis, there would be conflict with Policies 42, 44, 45 and 48G of the City Plan 2026 in so far as they are material considerations relevant to the appeal. Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure proposals respond to their context; conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance; and that advertisements are sensitively designed in terms of their size, location and their impact on the building on which they are displayed, local context, street scene and wider townscape. For the same reasons, it would also not be in line with the guidance contained in the Council's Streets and Spaces SPD; and with Paragraph 141 of the Framework.
32. Whilst not raised by the parties, given my reasoning above, I have considered whether the grant of a split decision would be feasible. Namely, allowing the scaffolding shroud / building wrap with a 1:1 trompe l'oeil printed image of the building on each elevation and the inset advertisement zones on the Regent Street and Piccadilly elevations; and dismissing the inset advertisement zone on the Piccadilly Circus elevation.
33. However, the shroud / building wrap and inset advertisement zones are being applied for together and are integral. The appellant submits that when any of the inset advertisement zones are not in use they would be replaced with the trompe l'oeil image of the building; and I note the Council's suggested 'Fallow period' condition to control this. Nonetheless, the proposal before me does not include a complete depiction of the building, only one which incorporates the parts of the façades surrounding the proposed integrated inset advertisement zones. On this basis, a split decision in the form of the above would result in an unduly large and visually jarring blank zone bordered by the trompe l'oeil depiction on the Piccadilly

Circus elevation. This would be equally unacceptable in relation to the amenity of the area within such a sensitive heritage context. For these reasons, I have not issued a split decision.

Conclusion

34. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

F Cullen

INSPECTOR