



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/Z/20/3252672

37, Green Lane, Northwood, HA6 3AE

- 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 Ashok Chowdry, Fruity Fresh (Western) Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 12546/ADV/2020/17, dated 5 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 April 2020.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 2 internal illuminated fascia signs and 1 internally illuminated hanging sign.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description of the development is most accurately described on the Council's Refusal Notice, which I have therefore used in the banner above.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a non-designated heritage asset and is located in the Green Lane Conservation Area. The 'Northwood town centre, Green Lane conservation area' leaflet (November 2009) identifies 'particularly fine bank buildings', of which this is one, and it therefore makes an important contribution to the historical setting of the area.
5. The building is on a prominent location, on a corner of Northwood high street, at the end of a brick-built parade of shops. At the ground floor level, the host building is distinctive for having retained the original windows and architectural plasterwork. Above this, the host building displays sash windows and ionic pillar detailing, with a stone balustrade screening the roof. When viewed from the high street, the building is therefore still read as a coherent whole.
6. I consider that a line of advertising across the centre of the building and a small projecting sign would not unduly distract the viewer from the coherence of the building because the proposal exploits the existing string course as a strong horizontal feature. Horizontal signs at this level, many much larger,

were typical locally and I therefore do not consider that it would be harmful to the amenity of the area in this regard.

7. However, while I accept that there are several signs illuminated by lamps or internally nearby, at the site visit I observed that this was generally on a small scale. In addition, the illuminated signs were not attached to such a prominent and architecturally important building. For these reasons, I do not consider that illuminating such a large horizontal tract of the structure would be in keeping with the character of the building or the area. In addition, illumination of signage on Oaklands Gate, on which the side of the bank is situated, would introduce an inappropriately commercial feel to an otherwise quieter street. For these reasons, illuminated signage would be harmful to the amenity of the area.
8. I note that permission was granted in 1996 for illuminated signage, but both local and national policies have changed since then, so this does not set a precedent. I also note that the proposal appears consistent in scope with the earlier signage associated with the bank. As the site is in a conservation area, development is an opportunity to conserve and enhance an asset, so it does not automatically follow that an earlier example should be followed.
9. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of "preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of a Conservation Area, and this is a matter of considerable weight. For the reasons above, I do not consider that illuminated signage would preserve or enhance the integrity of the building nor the area.
10. I have taken into account Policy DMHB 13A of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020), which requires that advertisements must protect the visual amenity of the area and have an appropriate type of illumination, and so are material in this case. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with this policy.

Conclusions

11. For these reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR