
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 February 2025

by **D Cleary MTCP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3359240

Roundabout, Brade Drive, Coventry CV2 2RZ

- 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 J Woodward against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/0002030/ADV.
 - The advertisements are described as proposed non-illuminated sponsorship signs x 4.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the banner above, I have amended the site address from that which was used in the application form to that which is contained within the decision notice of the Council and also the appeal form, as I consider this more accurately reflects the location of the site.
3. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 12 December 2024. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended. As a result, I have not sought submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by taking this approach.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the advertisements on a) the amenity of the area; and, b) public safety.

Reasons

Amenity

5. The appeal site relates to a roundabout which is located on Hinckley Road (the A4600), a busy arterial route between the M6 and Coventry city centre. Wigston Road and Brade Drive are side roads which connect to the roundabout. The roundabout is small in size and is raised from the road which heightens its presence in the public highway. The roundabout contains a number of directional traffic signs, which are mounted on posts. These are positioned centrally and appear highly concentrated on the small roundabout. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character and, as such, the area is heavily influenced by commercial signage. Furthermore, traffic signals, street light columns, and

telecommunications masts, along with their associated cabinets, add to the high level of visual clutter in the area.

6. The appeal proposes the installation of four advertisements on the roundabout. Each advertisement would be approximately 1000mm in width and approximately 500mm in height. The adverts would be mounted on posts and would have a maximum projection above ground level of 1000mm. The adverts would be positioned to the sides of the existing road signage, with each proposed sign facing towards one vehicular point of entry onto the roundabout.
7. The roundabout occupies a prominent location within the public highway which is exacerbated by its elevated and pronounced design. The siting of the advertisements would result in a greater visual spread of paraphernalia on this roundabout. This spread would be in all directions. Together with the existing signs on the roundabout, the proposed adverts would result in further concentration of signage within a modest parcel of land. As such, the roundabout would become overly dominated by signage. Therefore, the signs along with their mounting posts would result in the roundabout appearing highly cluttered. The high concentration of signage on such a small space would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area.
8. I acknowledge that the site is an urban location which has high levels of street furniture and other paraphernalia which is indicative of its location. I also acknowledge that each advertisement is, in isolation, relatively small and non-illuminated. Nonetheless, the addition of four advertisements on a modest roundabout, which is already heavily influenced by signage, would result in an over concentration of visual clutter in a very small area. I note the appellants suggestion that they would be willing to accept a reduction of adverts on this roundabout. However, given the site context and the concerns that I have outlined above I do not consider that any one sign to be particularly any more or less visually harmful than any other. Therefore, I am not persuaded that a reduction in the number of signs, in the positions shown, would remedy the visual harm.
9. I have had regard to the examples of other advertisements in the area which have been highlighted by the appellant. The Hinckley Road/Parkway/Eden Road roundabout is much bigger than the appeal site. This includes a high level of vegetation, while the level of other street furniture on the roundabout is not visually concentrated. Those sponsorship signs are viewed against the backdrop of the vegetation and set away from other street furniture. As such, they appropriately assimilate into the area without causing visual harm. The Burns Road/Longfellow Road/Walsgrave/Road site relates to a smaller roundabout but contains vegetation which provides a soft backdrop for the two adverts. In addition, the surrounding area does not appear to be as heavily influenced by street clutter due to a greater prevalence of residential uses around that site. As such I do not find either example to be directly comparable to the appeal scheme. I have also had regard to the various appeal decisions which have been cited by the appellant. With the exception of these sites relating to roundabouts, I do not have full details of the schemes, or a full understanding of their context, to draw any meaningful or helpful comparisons. In any event, I have considered this appeal on its individual merits.
10. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan insofar as they are relevant to visual amenity. Policy DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan 2017 (the LP) requires, amongst other things, that proposals respect and enhance

their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. As the advertisements would be harmful to amenity, it would not accord with the policies of the development plan.

Public Safety

11. Planning Practice Guidance¹ (the PPG) states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, and those at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. These include junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. Furthermore, the PPG advises² that the main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are those which are illuminated; those which could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights; and, those subject to frequent changes of the display. Moreover, those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal can also pose a risk to highway safety. A number of these factors are relevant to this appeal.
12. The existing signage on the roundabout is positioned centrally, away from its edge. This ensures that drivers have reasonably good forward vision of vehicles entering the roundabout from the opposite direction. The proposed adverts would be positioned to the sides of the existing installations resulting in a spread of visual clutter and creates an obstruction across much of the roundabouts width. Due to the elevated nature of the roundabout, when approaching from all directions, the position of the adverts would mean that clear sightlines towards the opposite side are likely to be obstructed. The erosion of forward sightlines has the potential to result in vehicles not being fully in view until much later in their manoeuvre on the roundabout. Furthermore, the erosion of sightlines would add uncertainty on a vehicles intended manoeuvre. This has the potential to lead to vehicles entering the roundabout when it may not be safe to do so, resulting in unsafe manoeuvres, reducing reaction times and, consequently, an increase the possibility of vehicular conflict.
13. There is a dip in Hinckley Road on the approach to the roundabout from the M6. This means that the elevated roundabout appears even more pronounced from this direction. There is a controlled pedestrian crossing on the opposite side of the roundabout (outside the Mount Pleasant public house) which is positioned close to the roundabout exit. The existing signage on the roundabout, when approaching from the M6, already partially obscures the signals of this crossing. The position of the proposed adverts has the potential to further obscure views of these signals when approaching/entering the roundabout from the M6 direction. Due to this obstruction of the signals the adverts may result in much shorter reaction times for drivers to respond to any signal change. This would be to the detriment of public safety for both users of the highway and pedestrians.
14. The appellant has made reference to various documents^{3,4,5} although full details of these have not been provided to me. As such, I cannot determine their full relevance to this appeal. My attention is also drawn to the document "Roundabout

¹ Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306

² Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306

³ Transport for London (TfL)'s Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice (2013)

⁴ Oviedo Trespalacios et al (2019)

⁵ RAS0706: Reported road collisions and casualties by contributory factor and local authority, Great Britain, 10 years up to 2022

Sponsorship, Milton Keynes 2022-2023”, published by Milton Keynes Council. This does not relate to the administrative area in which this appeal is located and appears to be a sales document. This document appears to relate to a set list of roundabouts which, presumably, that Council has assessed as being suitable for such sponsorship signage. Furthermore, while the document provides some detail of signage design, it provides little information on other important aspects such as location, siting and proximity to the highway network. These are critical factors in this appeal. As such, I do not consider this document to be supportive of the appeal proposals in this administrative area.

15. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan insofar as they are relevant to public safety. Policies AC1 and AC2 of the LP appear to relate more generally to the effects of development which results in traffic growth on the highway network, rather than being directly relevant to the appeal. However, Policy DE1 of the LP, does seek to ensure that proposals create safe environments, amongst other considerations. As the advertisements would be harmful to public safety, it would not accord with the development plan.

Conclusion

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

D Cleary

INSPECTOR