



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2025

by **M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/Z/24/3351276

34 Queenstown Road, London SW8 3RX

- 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 Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application reference is 24/01587/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1no. D250 D-Poster digital advertising display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

2. The Council has drawn my attention to the development plan policies it considers to be relevant to this appeal, as well as related guidance, and I have taken them into account as material considerations. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. In my determination of this appeal, the Council's policies have not therefore, by themselves, been decisive.
3. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") on 12 December 2024, replacing the December 2023 version extant at the time the application was determined. The amendments made did not have any bearing on the main issues in this appeal, and it was not therefore necessary to seek comments from the main parties on the updated Framework.

Main Issue

4. There is no dispute between the parties that the proposal would not cause harm to public safety. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is the north-facing side gable wall of the three-storey building at 34 Queenstown Road; the site is at the entrance to Robertson Street on the east side of Queenstown Road. The ground floor of No 34 is a commercial premises occupied by a restaurant/takeaway business, with residential or office units on the upper floors, in keeping with the general pattern of development on this part of Queenstown Road; Robertson Street is predominantly residential. The proposal is the installation of a digital advertisement, approximately 3m wide and 4.5m high,

which would display static images changing no more frequently than once every ten seconds.

6. The appellant describes the proposal as being to “repost” a previous 48-sheet advertisement display at the site. However, that appears to have been removed by August 2012, so the site is not currently used for the display of advertisements. Given that there are several shops, restaurants and other business premises, there is already a degree of other signage and advertising in the area. However, I saw that in the immediate vicinity most businesses tended to have either fascia or projecting box signs which are relatively small in scale; the area was not therefore one with a heavily commercial, or commercialised, appearance.
7. A short way south of the appeal site I did see one large digital advertisement on a north-facing gable wall at the entrance to Beaufoy Road. To my mind though, that location marked an obvious transition point from the low-key mixed commercial and residential environment of Queenstown Road to the evidently much busier retail area extending east-west along Wandsworth Road and Lavender Hill. Despite the proximity, the context is not therefore the same.
8. The Council's 2016 *Advertisement and Signage Guidance* (“the Guidance”) provides advice for the display of signs and advertisements. It advises, among other things, that they should “respect the character or appearance of the locality”, “suit the scale, proportions, period, architectural detailing and use of the building”, and “not harm the character of the building or obscure architectural features”.
9. No 34 Queenstown Road has a single-storey front projection, and it is this part of the building which accommodates the restaurant/takeaway and its associated signage. The side gable wall is free from advertisements, and marks an obvious transition from the more commercial Queenstown Road to the quieter, predominantly residential Robertson Street. The proposed advertisement would erode this visual distinction. It would also be installed in a position which would partly obscure the two blind windows at first and second floor level on the gable wall, and so would not be sympathetic to the character or detailing of the host building.
10. The digital display would, of necessity, emit light continuously to create an image. While I recognise that the luminance of the proposed advertisement could be controlled by a condition which would reduce its impact particularly during the hours of darkness, greater illumination would be required during the day in order to ensure that the image produced could be seen. I accept of course that advertisements are, by their nature, designed and intended to be seen. However, the bright appearance of the proposed digital screen would in my view make it a prominent part of the street scene. This would be particularly apparent in low light conditions such as during overcast days or at dawn and dusk, and would make it a prominent and intrusive feature given the mixed residential and commercial nature of the area.
11. The proposed advertisement would be around 16m from the windows of the residential properties on the other side of Robertson Street. It was not possible for me to establish whether those windows serve habitable rooms or not; the appellant suggested (based on Google Streetview imagery) that they are used primarily for storage. However, I note that the appellant also suggested that, in the event of the

appeal being allowed, a condition could be imposed requiring the display to be switched off between 23.00 at night and 07.00 the following morning.

12. The appellant's submissions included various examples of consent having been granted for digital advertising displays, although there was little to explain how or why most of those were comparable to the appeal scheme or should weigh in its favour. Two appeal decisions were brought to my attention, relating to 61 Balham High Road within the London Borough of Wandsworth¹ and 78-80 Notting Hill Gate within the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea². The Inspector described the area around 61 Balham High Road as "markedly commercial", while the Notting Hill Gate site was described as being within a "busy commercial area"; these appear markedly different from the somewhat lower-key and less commercialised surroundings of the appeal site in this case.
13. I have had regard to the benefits of digital advertising which the appellant has put to me, including a reduction in vehicle trips to service sites, a reduction in waste from the production of posters, the ability to broadcast emergency messages, and to use the displays for public messaging during "void periods". While I acknowledge these potential benefits, I do not consider that they outweigh the harm which I have found, particularly as the site is not currently host to any form of advertisement so associated servicing trips and poster waste do not currently arise at all.
14. Because of the separation distance from nearby residential properties and the potential for the display to be switched off at night, as I have described in paragraph 11, I am satisfied that the proposed advertisement would not cause significant harm to living conditions. However, for the reasons I have set out in paragraphs 6 to 10, I consider that it would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore have a harmful effect on the amenity of the area.
15. In accordance with the Regulations I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material. The proposal conflicts with Policies Q2, Q5, Q6, Q7 and Q17 of the 2021 Lambeth Local Plan which, among other things, seek to ensure that development is well-designed and does not compromise visual amenity, that local distinctiveness is sustained, and that advertisements contribute positively to the local scene.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector

¹ PINS Ref: APP/H5960/Z/20/3254607

² PINS Ref: APP/K5600/Z/17/3180456