



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2025 by S Indermaur BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3358890

Ramada Hotel, Butts, Coventry CV1 3GG

- 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 DPA Planning Ltd against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2024/0001845/ADV.
 - The development proposed is the installation of two digital billboards.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issues

3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out that powers thereunder shall be exercised 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. With this in mind, the main issues in the appeal are the effect of the proposals on visual amenity and public safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Visual Amenity

4. The appeal site is grass verge adjacent a hotel. There are a few modest sized static signs attached to lampposts along the street, one advert on the back of a bus stop and a small number of modest fascia signs on nearby buildings. This lends a pleasant consistency of scale where advertisements are concerned which contributes positively to the visual amenity of the area. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that 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 one where residents or passers-by will be aware of it.
5. The locality is currently devoid of illuminated signs or large stand-alone billboards. As such the proposal would appear as incongruous and out of scale with the more modest qualities of the area. There are some commercial uses in the vicinity of the appeal site as well as it being a large enough area to accommodate large advertisements. However, the location also has grass verges and trees which

creates a pleasant verdant feel. Therefore, the addition of a two large, illuminated billboards, even if they mimicked paper board, would detract from the attractive appearance of the street scene at this point.

6. The proposal would therefore result in harm to the visual amenity of the area, contrary to an assessment under the above regulations. Although not determinative, the proposal would conflict with the aims of Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan 2017 (LP). This outlines that all development proposals must respond to the physical context of the site and preserve or enhance the character and setting of a major road amongst other things. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which, in regard to this main issue, sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Public Safety

7. The appeal site is located next to a busy classified road which connects to the city centre. The proposal would be located in close proximity to a junction with 3 lanes of traffic on either side of the carriageway, as well as a set of traffic lights and a footpath. PPG outlines that drivers need to take more care at junctions and pedestrian crossings as they present more traffic hazards. Furthermore, it sets out that adverts that are most likely to cause danger include those which, because of their siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal.
8. For westbound traffic, the display would be seen in the same view as the oncoming traffic signals. This can be distracting for drivers negotiating three heavily trafficked lanes as they may need to manoeuvre before the traffic signals for the next junction, requiring extra care, attention and concentration. Although there are mounted paper advertisements and an illuminated bus stop advertisement in the vicinity, these do not distract drivers in the same way as a substantially larger LED advert with changing images would. Especially in an area that requires a significant level of concentration and alertness to unexpected movements from motorists and pedestrians.
9. One of the adverts would be purposefully angled to allow people travelling eastbound to view it. Whilst positioned on the other side of the road relative to travel, its size and operation would grab the attention of motorists which would be unduly distracting. Whilst potentially not as harmful to attention as the matters I have raised above, it would still amount to an unacceptable distraction on an otherwise busy arterial multi lane road which includes the potential for static or emerging busses at a stop in lane 1, almost opposite the appeal site. With this and the above in mind, the proposal would cause harm to public safety. Contrary to the above regulations. Policy AC2 of the LP principally relates to capacity of the road network and does not relate to safety generally.

Other Matter

10. I do not have full details of any decisions relating to the appellant's other installations adjacent roads. I cannot therefore be sure they are sufficiently similar to the circumstances before me such that my above findings would change.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. The proposal would fail an assessment under the aforementioned regulations. I therefore recommend the appeal is dismissed.

S Indermaur

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR