



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/Z/25/3364611

211 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8HA

- 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 Ltd against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/25/0221.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of a D6 Small Format Advertisement Display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the erection of a D6 Small Format Advertisement Display at 211 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8HA, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PL/25/0221. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations and the additional conditions set out on page 3.

Main issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on highway safety and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The Council has referred to policies in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 (the local plan). The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, the Council's policies alone cannot be decisive, but I have taken them into account as a material consideration, together with the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) (updated 2024).
4. Relevant local plan policies include TR3, CC7 and CC8, which relate, among other things, to highway safety and design in the public realm and OU4 which relates particularly to the impact of advertisements both individually and cumulatively.
5. The NPPF states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed and that account should be taken of cumulative impacts.

6. The appeal site is a large petrol filling station (PFS) located on a busy A road which is subject to a 20mph speed restriction. It incorporates a number of facilities including a shop, sandwich outlet and car wash. At the time of my visit there were several signs on the site in addition to the main illuminated totem and canopy, including some free standing non-illuminated signs adjacent to the highway pavement.

Highway safety

7. The proposed advertisement display would be located at the entrance to the PFS at the north end of the forecourt island adjacent to the pavement, where there is an existing freestanding poster sign and an A-frame sign, which it would replace.
8. I consider that, although the proposed advertisement display would be larger than the existing freestanding ones, and of a different format in terms of appearance, changing images and illumination, it would not result in an added distraction for drivers along the road. I understand that the sequential changes in image and the level of illumination digital display would be controlled remotely to avoid undue visual distraction in accordance with Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidelines.
9. The site is located close to a number of road junctions, signalled crossings and bus stops with their associated street furniture and signage. It is part of a group of commercial businesses on both sides of the road which display a variety of advertisements, all of which have a cumulative effect on demands for the attention of drivers.
10. However, the road is straight, level and well-lit, with good forward visibility, and subject to a 20mph speed restriction. I consider that, in this context, the removal of existing signage and replacement with the proposed, albeit larger, advertisement would not result in an unacceptable additional distraction to drivers.
11. I conclude that the proposal would not result in harm to highway safety and that it is not contrary to the aims of local planning policies or the NPPF.

Character and appearance

12. The proposed display would be a noticeable feature in the street scene by virtue of its larger size and format. However, I consider that, in the context of the varied street furniture and the number and varying size of signs in this commercial area, it would not appear unduly prominent or out of place. The ability to control the quality of the display and level of illumination in rapid response to changing conditions would help to maintain an acceptable appearance over the lifetime of the installation.
13. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the visual amenities of the area and that it is not contrary to the aims of local planning policies or the NPPF.

Conclusions

14. I find that the proposed advertisement display would not cause harm either to highway safety or the character and appearance of the area. The appellants have put forward a lengthy argument in support of the proposal including the benefits of the technology involved in the display. Whilst I accept that there

are benefits, I consider that some of those suggested are somewhat overstated in this instance. In some respects, the impact of the proposal would be neutral rather than positive. However, on balance, in the absence of harm, I conclude that the proposal is acceptable and consistent with local planning policies and the NPPF.

Conditions

15. I have considered the following additional conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the Regulations and the tests set out in the Framework. They are necessary in the interests of amenity and highway safety, in accordance with local plan policies and the NPPF.
- 1) Should the installation break down it shall default to either a black screen or freeze in one position, no error messages shall be displayed.
 - 2) The maximum luminance from the D6 Small Format Advertisement Display hereby permitted shall not exceed 250cd/m² between 18:00 hours and 06:00 hours and 600cd/m² between 06:01 hours and 17:59 hours.
 - 3) No individual advertisement displayed shall contain moving (or apparently moving) images or flashing images and nor shall they display any telephone number, website email or other social media details.
 - 4) No advertisement shall be displayed for a duration of less than 10seconds.
 - 5) Controls shall be in place to ensure the uninterrupted transition of images and that transitions shall be no more than 0.1seconds.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR