



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 May 2025

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/25/3362776

2 Nathan Way, Thamesmead, Greenwich, SE28 0FA

- 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 Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 24/3762/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is the erection of a D48 illuminated advertising display.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the appeal proposal on public safety and on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The Regulations, the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) all state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. Although I have had regard to the planning policies and guidance referred to by the main parties, these have not been a decisive consideration in my decision.
4. The proposed advertisement would be sited within the boundary of a Shurgard Self Storage Building located on the corner of Nathan Way and Pettman Crescent (A206). The surrounding area contains many commercial premises, although a high density residential flatted scheme is currently under construction on the northern site of Nathan Crescent. Beyond Pettman Crescent to the west of the site there are a range of commercial uses, including a McDonalds and Woolwich Delivery Office. To the south of the site the site is bounded by a railway line, Plumstead Railway Station and the adjacent Plumstead High Street.
5. The proposed 'D' poster would be internally illuminated and would display multiple static advertisements on rotation, sequencing every 10 seconds. It would have a width of 6m, a height of 3m and a depth of 0.061m. It would be elevated 10m above ground, thereby reaching a maximum height of 13m.

Public Safety

6. The proposed advertisement would be positioned in the south-western corner of the site with the digital screen positioned facing north, so that it would be visible to drivers travelling southbound along Pettman Crescent (A206) which forms part of the Strategic Highway Network.
7. This section of Pettman Crescent is a flyover, which operates with southbound traffic only, with three lanes of traffic and a pedestrian footway. The proposed advertisement is located on the approach to a signalised intersection junction with Plumstead High Street and Plumstead Road. At this junction there are designated crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
8. During my late morning site visit, Pettman Crescent was heavily used with almost a constant stream of traffic, with some vehicles travelling at speed. In my judgement, the proposed advertisement would be sited at a critical point where greater driver concentration is required in relation to the approach to the junction including for lane changing, with the two westernmost lanes designated for right-turning traffic whilst the easternmost lane is for left turning traffic.
9. Whilst only a snap-shot in time, I observed that vehicles changing lane in the vicinity of the appeal site was a frequent occurrence, with drivers requiring a high level of concentration in order to exercise due care and attention for other road users. This would be especially the case for road users unfamiliar with the local highway network, given the volume of traffic. Indeed, the accident data involving both vehicles and pedestrians, referred to by both the Council and the appellant, highlights the potential for accidents along this stretch of Pettman Crescent, although clearly the digital advertisement was not in place at the time of these accidents so could not have been a contributory factor.
10. The proposed advertisement would be positioned in a nearside carriageway position with the display likely to be within the eye line of drivers. I acknowledge that the level of illumination would be limited to 300cd/m² during the hours of darkness and that during the daytime the level of illumination would adjust according to environmental conditions. I acknowledge that conditions could be imposed to control hours of illumination, luminance levels, and the frequency and manner of change between images, amongst other things. However, in my view, the introduction of a large, internally illuminated screen, displaying a variety of static images that change at intervals would attract the attention of road users to a significant degree. The advertisement screen would not obstruct visibility but due to its siting, size, illumination and frequent changes of display, it would draw the eye of road users at a time when I consider they are required to exercise particular care and attention. Furthermore, it would have the potential to detract road users' attention away from the modest directional road signage and lane information, reducing the clarity of those signs and possibly resulting in driver confusion and late braking and lane changes.
11. By introducing an unacceptable distraction to users of this section of Pettman Crescent, the proposal would result in an unacceptable increase in risk of accidents for highway users. The harmful effect to highway safety would not be mitigated by conditions suggested by the appellant.
12. In reaching this conclusion I have had regard to the examples of approved advertisements to which the appellant has referred to in the Planning Appeal

Statement. However, it is difficult to draw comparisons between the various locations that are distant from the appeal site and the particular circumstances of each case. In any event, I am required to determine the appeal on its own merits.

13. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on public safety by way of highway safety. It is therefore contrary to the Framework, Policy T2 of the London Plan (2021) (LP) and Policies IM4, IM(b) and DH(f) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014) (CS) insofar as these policies seek to ensure that highway safety is not prejudiced.

Amenity

14. The site is within an area that contains a range of commercial users along Pettman Crescent and Plumstead High Street, with a variety of associated illuminated and non-illuminated advertisements. These include the large lettering on the adjacent Shurgard Self Storage Building as well as its free-standing sign at the junction with Nathan Avenue.
15. The proposed advertisement would be positioned in the south-western corner of the site on an existing area of concrete. Existing views of the site from the approach along Pettman Crescent are dominated by bushes and trees that lie just beyond the site, which add to the visual amenity of this urban area.
16. The proposed advertisement would be viewed partly in conjunction with a range of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia and other free-standing signs. However, owing to the size of the advertisement, measuring 6m wide and 3m high, together with its height above ground and illuminated nature, it would be a highly prominent feature which would detract from the amenity value of the existing trees and shrubs which would form its backdrop. From what I could see, the overall size and elevated height of the advertisement display would significantly exceed other more modest advertisements in the area and along with its illuminated nature and changing imagery, would cause it to stand out as being overly large, incongruous and out of scale in this location.
17. Consequently, the proposal would be visually intrusive and would represent an inappropriate incursion into this environment, resulting in harm to the visual amenity of the area. The imposition of conditions would not overcome my concerns regarding the inappropriate location of the proposal development and its harmful effect on the amenity of the area.
18. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the area. As such it would not comply with paragraph 141 of the Framework which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. In this regard, Regulation 3 (2a) of the Regulations sets out that factors relevant to amenity can include the general characteristics of the locality.
19. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan in so far as they are relevant. Policy D3 of the LP and Policies DH1 and DH(f) of the CS seek to protect amenity (amongst other matters) and so are relevant in this case. I have concluded that the proposed advertisement would harm amenity and therefore the proposal conflicts with the above policies.

Other Matters

20. A number of matters have been raised regarding the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposal. However, whilst noted, advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR