



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2025

by **C Shearing BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 JUNE 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/Z/25/3362164

Highway Land Opposite The Friary, Corner House, Guildford GU1 4SQ

- 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 Mr Punj of Trueform Engineering Limited against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/01845.
 - The advertisement proposed is one internally illuminated static panelled cabinet with 75" digital LCD screens.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for one internally illuminated static panelled cabinet with 75" digital LCD screens as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations¹.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development used in the banner heading above is taken from the appellant's Statement of Case and the Council's decision notice, since this more concisely describes the proposal.
3. The relevant Regulations cited above and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) are clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The appeal has therefore been determined on this basis and my considerations are limited to these matters.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are: the effects of the proposal on amenity, with particular regard to visual effects, and; the effects on public safety, with particular regard to the safety of highway users.

Reasons

Amenity

5. The appeal relates to a traffic island forming part of Guildford's busy gyratory system. The island is triangular in shape and positioned in the middle of the highway where it accommodates the waiting areas serving three pedestrian crossings which cross Onslow Street and Bridge Street. The surrounding area is vibrant and typical of a town centre, being characterised by various paraphernalia

¹ Schedule 2, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007 as amended

associated with the road network and surrounding commercial uses. The island contains various traffic lights, two bins and a wayfinding sign, and I observed it to experience relatively heavy footfall.

6. Given the significant degree of paraphernalia in the surrounding area and across the island, I do not consider the proposal would unacceptably add to visual clutter in the area, particularly as it would replace one of the existing bins. Many of the items in the immediate area comprise vertical features, including traffic lights, road signs and the existing wayfinding sign. As a result, the proposal would sit comfortably within this setting. Its dark colour would also respect the tones of other street furniture nearby and overall, the proposal would contribute to the vibrant urban character.
7. The site is within the Bridge Street Conservation Area (BSCA). The BSCA Appraisal 2003 acknowledges its key characteristics to include a strong sense of enclosure from buildings as well as its constant activity and vitality associated with being a major vehicular route. Accordingly, the statutory provisions of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are relevant to the appeal. The nearby Rodboro Buildings are also grade II listed.
8. The Council have not raised objection to the effects of the proposal on these designated heritage assets. Given the findings of my site visit and the established character of the immediate area described above, which forms part of the BSCA's character and the setting in which the listed building is experienced, I have no strong reason to reach a different view. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the BSCA and the setting of the Rodboro Buildings as well as other locally listed buildings nearby.
9. In conclusion on this main issue, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its effects on amenity. It would comply with Policy D10 of the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan: Development Management Policies 2023 (the DMP) and the Framework insofar as they relate to amenity and effects on the character of an area.

Public Safety

10. I observed the island to be heavily used by pedestrians, which could include those with children or with mobility or visual impairments. I note the comments regarding incidents and near incidents surrounding the junction although I have not been provided with details of those matters or their causes.
11. The proposed advertisement would replace an existing bin and would be narrower in its footprint. As such I am not convinced that the proposal would adversely affect the movement of pedestrians on the island when compared to the existing situation. For the same reason and given its set back from the road edge, it would not be likely to result in pedestrians crossing the road at unsafe locations. Even if the height of the advertisement column were to cause a change in how pedestrians traverse the island, given the size of the island as a whole, it is not apparent that this would cause harm to the safety of pedestrians, including those with disabilities or children.
12. There is not substantive technical evidence from either main party regarding the effect of the proposal on vehicular visibility splays around the junction. Given the direction of traffic moving around the island, together with the narrow profile and

orientation of the proposed column, and spaces which would remain around the island, I am not convinced that the proposal would amount to an obstruction which would cause harm to highway safety. I also note the County Highway Authority found that the proposal would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway.

13. There could be potentially dangerous scenarios which could result around the traffic island, however, there is not substantive evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would add to those risks or have unacceptable effects on highway safety.
14. In conclusion on this main issue, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its effects on public safety. It would comply with Policy D10 of the DMP and the Framework insofar as they relate to public and highway safety. Neither do I find conflict with the cited parts of the Traffic Signs Manual 2019 or Manual for Streets 2 where they relate to the effects of obstructions.

Conditions

15. Under Regulation 14(a) all advertisements which are granted express consent are subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Based on the evidence, including the comments of the Council on this matter, I do not consider other conditions would be necessary.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, the appeal is allowed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR