
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2025

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government

Decision date: 3rd of July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/Z/25/3363570

A299 Thanet Way, Hernhill, Kent ME13 9EL

- 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 Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 24/505056/ADV, dated 26 November 2024, was refused by notice dated 14 March 2025.
 - The advertisement proposed is the erection of 1 x internally illuminated digital hoarding sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

3. The proposal is for a large 48-sheet size internally illuminated digital hoarding sign facing the northeast bound carriageway of the A299 between Brenley Corner and Whitstable. The A299 is a fast dual carriageway running through an essentially rural area but the appeal site lies adjacent to a service area which comprises a petrol filling station with convenience store, jet wash/electric vehicle charging area, roadside hotel and coffee shop building. On the opposite side of the dual carriageway lies another petrol filling station and coffee shop building together with a large industrial type building. The hoarding would show a series of static displays on rotation with its illumination set to standard industry levels both during the day and at night.
4. The digital hoarding sign would be sited on the grass verge immediately ahead of the northeast bound service area adjacent to the junction with Highstreet Road where currently a wide, low level, non-illuminated display is erected. In addition to this there are numerous illuminated and non-illuminated displays related to the various commercial premises on both sides of the road including corporate logos and brightly coloured canopies and pole signs relating to the two petrol stations which are open and thus lit 24 hours a day.
5. However, these advertisements essentially relate to the roadside businesses concerned. There are no 48-sheet size displays of general advertising of the nature proposed which would be unique along this section of the A299. Whilst the digital hoarding would not exceed the height of nearby buildings, it would be considerably larger than the other advertisement displays nearby and

improved landscaping, whilst welcome, would not mitigate its visual impact. As an essentially rural road with only occasional roadside facilities along its length, the proposal would be seen as an unexpected, overly prominent and unduly intrusive feature in its setting. The site is not suburban in character as claimed by the appellant.

6. The gradual transition nationwide of 48-sheet billboards from paste and paper to digital displays and the overall reduction in the number of displays as part of this is appreciated but the example sites shown in the appellant's statement are exclusively in urban settings. Although the appellant claims there are a number of similar sites nationally that have gained consent, the only example provided is that at Main Street, Newmains, North Lanarkshire, over 400 miles away. Furthermore, that consent involved the reduction of four 48-sheet displays to two.

Conclusion

7. For these reasons the proposal would cause significant harm to the visual amenity of the area, the relevant test under the advertisement regulations. It would conflict with Policies CP4, DM14 and DM15 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 which require proposals to be appropriate to their surroundings, of a scale sympathetic to the location and for advertisements to minimise harm to amenity. It would also conflict with Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework which opposes poorly sited advertisements.
8. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR