

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2025

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/Z/25/3364930

The Liberty Centre, 11 Western Road, Romford RM1 3RL

- 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 London Lites Ltd against the decision of the Council of The London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref. is A0001.25.
 - The advertisement proposed is for the proposed installation of one LED Digital Display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the proposed installation of one LED Digital Advertisement Display at The Liberty Centre, 11 Western Road, Romford RM1 3RL in accordance with the terms of the application Ref. A0001.25. 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 following additional conditions:
 - 1) The advertisements permitted by this consent shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: LL001, LL003, LL004, LL005, LL006, LL008.
 - 2) The minimum time between successive displayed images of the advertisements permitted by this consent shall be 20 seconds and any sequential change between advertisements will take place over a period no greater than 1 second.
 - 3) The screen shall be designed so that in the event of breakdown it shall automatically power off to prevent flashing error messaged being displayed and shall be so maintained.
 - 4) The advertisements permitted by this consent shall have no special effects (including noise, smell, smoke animation, exposed cold cathode tubing, flashing, scrolling, three dimensional, intermittent, or video elements) of any kind. They shall have no visual effects of any kind to accompany the transition between any two successive messages. The replacement image must not incorporate any fading, swiping or other animated transitional method.
 - 5) No images shall resemble official road traffic signs, traffic lights or traffic matrix signs.
 - 6) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisements permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/m2 between dusk and dawn.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on public safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a corner elevation of a retail centre, looking out over a large roundabout with four spurs. It has some grass over its centre and chevron and arrow signage around its circumference. In the vicinity of the site, the highway and its infrastructure have a dominant presence with wide carriageways, directional signs, CCTV poles and lighting columns all in close proximity, set in an urban environment.
4. I observed during my site visit that local roads approaching the roundabout have good visibility, and any traffic nearing the location generally travels at appropriate speed and with caution.
5. The Planning Practice Guidance states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, with those proposed at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. Furthermore, it advises that the main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal can also pose a risk to highway safety.
6. The new advertisement would be primarily orientated towards motorists travelling in a broadly northly direction along Mercury Gardens or entering the junction from the Western Road to the northeast; other views would be more oblique in nature. Nonetheless, being relatively clear stretches of highway, such road conditions would allow drivers time to register the new form of advertising at the site.
7. To my mind, within this context the proposed style of the advertising would neither be distracting, nor in a position where motorists crossing the path of other road users would be prevented the opportunity to register the sign in advance when navigating the roundabout.
8. My reasoning is supported by accident traffic data, which suggests that there are no significant public safety matters locally. Furthermore, the frequency in the change of the display and other effects that can cause distraction, such as flashing lights and moving elements within the display, can be controlled by condition. Taken in the round, I am satisfied that the scheme would not materially reduce drivers' attention, thus avoiding conflict with other road users.
9. In accordance with the Regulations, I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan insofar as they are applicable. Policy 23 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 and Policies D8 and T2 of the London Plan collectively require that the public realm is well-designed and safe. As such, these are deemed a material consideration insofar as they are relevant to public safety.
10. I conclude, therefore, that the advertisement would not have a harmful effect on public safety in the area. The scheme would meet with the objectives of the above policies.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I find that the appeal should be allowed subject to the five standard conditions. In addition, the approved plans are listed for certainty. In the interests of highway safety, I have controlled the frequency of change in displays, the interval between successive displays and any breakdown procedure. I have also restricted other visual or special effects, any images resembling road traffic signs and illumination between dusk and dawn.

C Hall

INSPECTOR