



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2025

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2025

Appeal Reference: APP/J0540/Z/25/3364503

Land adjoining Blue and Green Carparks, Queensgate Shopping Centre, Peterborough PE1 1PY

- 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 IREEF Queensgate Peterborough Propco S.a.r.l against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application reference is 24/01472/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described in the application form as: “2 no freestanding LED signboards (displaying static images)”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The application for express consent that gives rise to this appeal covered two separate proposed freestanding LED signboards, associated with multi-storey carparks at the Queensgate Shopping Centre in Peterborough. The first proposal related to a proposed sign adjacent to the “Cavell Blue” multi-storey carpark, while the second related to a proposed sign adjacent to the “Clare Green” multi-storey carpark.
3. In determining the application, Peterborough City Council issued a split decision. Consent was granted for the first signboard but was refused for the second signboard.
4. The submitted appeal form makes it clear that the appeal is made in relation to the “Proposed sign 2 only”. That is to say that this appeal relates to the single freestanding digital signboard that is proposed to be erected adjacent to “Clare Green” carpark.
5. For the avoidance of doubt, however, I can state that the proposed signboard adjacent to the “Cavell Blue” carpark is not contentious and does not give rise to any meaningful planning concerns.

Main issue

6. In relation to this advertisement consent appeal, the legislation makes it clear that the powers conferred by the Regulations may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety; the Development Plan may be a material consideration

but cannot be determinative. Thus, the main issue to be determined in the appeal is the effect of the proposed advertisement on highway safety.

Reasons

7. The Queensgate Shopping Centre lies to the north and west of the Cathedral Square in Peterborough, which is laid out in front of the Cathedral gateway. Thus, the shopping centre is at the heart of the City and it covers an extensive area with shops and other facilities. Three car parks serving the shopping centre are located immediately to the west of the centre, together with Queensgate Bus Station. These car parks are interlinked but are given separate names (and are colour-coded): “Cavell Blue”, “Clare Green” and “Royce Red”.
8. A main through route, Bourges Boulevard, marks the western frontage of this group of car parks, between Westgate to the north and Queensgate Roundabout to the south. The roundabout is a large traffic island, planted with shrubs and mature trees, giving access to Cowgate, which in turn leads to Church Street and Peterborough Cathedral Square. Other exit roads from the roundabout connect with the wider road network, since it is a major traffic hub.
9. The car park buildings are large multistorey car parks, featuring long horizontal brickwork panels on the elevation to Bourges Boulevard, interrupted by vertical brickwork elements and softened, in places, by landscaping.
10. The first of the proposed signs would be located in front of the northern end of the “Cavell Blue” car park, at the junction between Bourges Boulevard and Westgate. This is not contentious, as I have stated above.
11. The second proposed sign, which is the subject of this appeal, would be located at the southern end of the “Clare Green” car park, facing the Queensgate Roundabout. There is a landscaped area in front of the southern frontage of the car parks, adjacent to the roundabout, although this appears to be poorly maintained at present. The new sign would be 6 metres wide and 3 metres high in a slim frame and mounted on a central leg, with changing static images.
12. The proposed new sign would not have a harmful effect on visual amenity; indeed, it would be in keeping with the scale and architectural character of the shopping centre car parks and the urban surroundings more generally.
13. The new sign would, however, be located very close to the point where Bourges Boulevard enters the Queensgate Roundabout. I am convinced that it would create a significant distraction to drivers in this busy part of the highway layout and that such a distraction would be highly undesirable and unsafe. Drivers turning into the roundabout, as well as those on the roundabout itself could have their attention diverted from other vehicles or other traffic signage, increasing the risk of accidents. In consequence, I am sure that this proposed sign ought not to be allowed.
14. As the ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ points out, the advertisement control regime ought not to be unduly onerous and advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety (taking account of cumulative impacts). In this case, however, the proposed advertisement would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, increasing the risk of traffic accidents.

15. I am convinced, therefore, that the appeal must fail and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations (including the fact that the earlier “Q” signage would be removed), I have found nothing that outweighs those considerations that have led me to this decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR