



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2025

by **B J Sims BSc (Hons) CEng MICE MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/25/3362754

Land at junction of Houlding Street and Walton Beck Road, Liverpool, L4 0UH.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Cosmos Holdings NW Limited against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24F/3020.
 - The development proposed is to retain 1No TV screen at the rear of the Sandon pub.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The retrospective nature of the proposal has no influence upon the consideration of the planning issues arising.
3. The Appellants raise concern that, in processing the application, the Council offered insufficient opportunity to discuss measures and conditions to mitigate any planning impacts of the development. However, the appeal can only proceed on the evidence available on the application as refused.

Main Issues

4. The main issues relate to visual and residential amenity, road safety and car parking. It is also necessary to take into account any planning benefits of the development.

Reasons

Visual and Residential Amenity

5. The disputed TV screen is a prominent feature of the urban landscape although in itself not severely out of keeping with the appeal premises and other commercial land uses nearby to the northwest. However, the upper part of the screen is clearly visible from outside the site, in particular at points to the west on Walton Breck Road.
6. When in use to display Liverpool FC fixtures, the large TV screen shows moving images potentially more noticeable than other urban light sources, or the stationery images associated with regular illuminated advertisement hoardings. However, the screen does not face directly towards any residential property.

7. More importantly, this use of the TV screen is necessarily associated with significant noise due to the associated loudspeakers as well as the vocal enthusiasm of fans watching the games at the Sandon pub, also evidently enjoying a range of food outlets and live bands, albeit the latter do not form part of the development at appeal.
8. It is to be recognised that the Sandon is a mere 200m or so from the Anfield stadium, where it is accepted that large football crowds will create much general activity and very significant noise and disturbance during play on home match days.
9. This noise and disturbance from the stadium will naturally already affect the residential properties in the densely residential areas immediately north, east and south of the appeal site. However, this will only occur during Liverpool FC home fixtures. By broadcasting both home and away games, the Sandon TV screen will roughly double the occasions when significant noise and disturbance due to the TV broadcasts and the crowd at the Sandon pub car park will be highly noticeable to local residents.
10. This would be especially true at properties closely backing onto the appeal site in Hawksworth Street, only separated from the TV and loudspeakers by a wall and boundary trees. Even during home games, it is to be expected that the use of the TV screen will add noticeably to the present level of noise from the stadium, intensifying noise impact on properties near the Sandon.
11. I consider overall that, despite a relatively modest level of formal environmental health complaint about its use, the TV screen has the potential to cause an unacceptable level of harm to visual and residential amenity in the vicinity of the appeal site. In the absence of any technical noise assessment to indicate otherwise, I consider the use of the TV screen to be contrary to Policies R1 and H7 of the adopted Liverpool Local Plan (LLP) with respect to noise pollution and the protection of amenity from the adverse effects of development in primarily residential areas.
12. The foregoing concerns are further borne out by a recent letter from the Police to the Council in terms that the Sandon TV screen has given rise to large crowds gathering in the streets from where the screen is visible, leading to chaotic conditions requiring police intervention on occasion, albeit any serious criminal behaviour is for the Police and not for the planning system to resolve.

Road Safety

13. There is concern too that the moving images on the screen are distracting to drivers, especially when moving south-eastward on Walton Breck Road, from where much of the screen is visible. Given the evident potential for driving conditions also to be affected by large, excited crowds of people in the streets and the intense interest that a local football fixture will understandably generate, I consider potential driver distraction to be a further factor counting against the continued use of the TV screen.
14. In the circumstances therefore, I find that the development is contrary to Policy TP2 of the LLP in this respect.
15. This view is also borne out by the recent Police letter, raising concerns over road congestion in the vicinity of the appeal site.

Car Parking

16. Any development is required by Policy TP8 of the LLP to provide sufficient usable, safe, off-street car parking space. In the case of the Sandon the requirement is for 36 car spaces according to the planning approval for the pub to offer bed and breakfast accommodation.
17. Evidently, when the TV screen is in use, this parking space is occupied by customers watching the match. With or without the presence of the food and music outlets, it is clear that any car parking is displaced onto the surrounding streets, such that the Sandon operates on the comparatively frequent match days without the car parking facilities required by its bed and breakfast approval. I recognise that alternative car parking options and non-car travel modes are available but, again the recent comments of the Police note difficulty in managing car parking due to people parking for soccer matches.
18. I therefore find that the use of the TV screen is contrary to Policy TP8 regarding car parking.

Planning Benefits

19. The importance of football culture to Liverpool is legendary and the benefit of the Sandon TV broadcasts to many fans unable or choosing not to attend matches, away or at home, in person is a material factor in favour of the continued use of the disputed TV screen.
20. There is further material planning benefit in the commercial advantage to the Sandon pub itself and the wider local economy.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. However, planning decisions are a matter of balance and, in this case, for the several reasons explained above, the appeal development is in conflict with policies of the LLP, which are essentially consistent with national planning policy. Thus, the continued use of the TV screen would be contrary to the local development plan as whole.
22. I do not consider that a planning condition limiting the use of the screen to match days only would be effective because it is the use of screen during the regular match days which gives rise to these policy conflicts. And limitations on sound levels would not be practically effective against excessive crowd noise, as a major impact on amenity.
23. The benefits of the development are considerable, but it is my overall conclusion that, on balance, the planning harm which the use of the TV screen causes is the overriding consideration, warranting dismissal of this appeal.

B J Sims

INSPECTOR