



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2025

by **J D Westbrook BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A2335/Z/25/3365838

16 Owen Road, Lancaster, LA1 2AR

- 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 Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Lancaster City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01172/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the erection of a D48 advertisement display.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the advertisement display on:
 - The visual amenity of the area around Owen Road, and
 - Highway safety around the junction of Owen Road and Morecambe Road.

Reasons

3. The proposed advertisement would be a single 48 sheet, LED illuminated display set on the gable wall of No 16 Owen Road, with its base some 4.6 metres above ground level. At the time of my visit, there were two small, static and non-illuminated advertisements on the wall, which appear to have been in place for many years. The gable wall and the existing advertisements are visible in the sight lines of those drivers traveling south-east along Owen Road and also those turning onto Owen Road from Morecambe Road to the west. The junction of Owen Road and Morecambe Road is traffic-light controlled at a point around 60 metres to the north-west. Traffic is one-way only along Owen Road from west to east in the vicinity of the appeal property.
4. The 2007 Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of public safety and amenity. In addition to the above documents, I note that Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Lancaster District (LP) indicates that an advertisement must not cause a public safety hazard or contribute to clutter or loss of amenity. It should be sensitive to the visual appearance of the building on which it is to be sited and the surrounding street scene; be appropriate to its setting and location and have due regard for local distinctiveness; not contribute to an

unsightly proliferation or clutter of signage in the vicinity; not cause a hazard to pedestrians or road users; and not cause a visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution into adjoining residential properties or unnecessarily cause poorly directed light pollution elsewhere.

5. The Council contends that due to the scale, prominence, elevated position, and type of illumination of the proposed display, along with the lack of any similar schemes in the immediate vicinity, it would appear as an obtrusive and conspicuous feature causing significant visual harm to the amenity of the area, and detrimental to the character of the streetscene. In addition, due to the location and nature of the proposed display, close to the signalised junction of Owen Road and Morecambe Road with pedestrian crossings, the proposal would cause a distraction to road users and conflict with the traffic signals and would be harmful to highway safety.

Visual Amenity

6. The Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. In this case, the appeal property currently has two small advertisements on its gable wall. These are non-illuminated and, whilst visible from the road, are not prominent either by scale or position. On the opposite side of Owen Road is a wide grassed area, with a small shopping parade to the southern side with flats above. The only advertisements readily visible in the vicinity of the appeal property are relatively discrete fascia signs for commercial properties, the majority of which would be beyond the grassed area to the south of the road and not part of the immediate street scene. The large LED illuminated display proposed for the appeal property would be uncharacteristic of the visual appearance of this part of Owen Road and also of the wider area around.
7. The display would occupy a large proportion of the gable end of No 16 and, as a substantial visual feature, would dominate the property. It would not be appropriate to its setting and location and would not have due regard for local distinctiveness. Whilst the degree of illumination could be controlled by condition, the fact of its illumination and the use of continually changing images would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area, which is relatively restrained and where there are no prominent advertisements.
8. On the basis of the above, I find that, on this issue, the proposed advertisement would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area around the junction of Owen Road and Morecambe Road. It would conflict with Policy DM21 of the LP and with policy on design in the Framework.

Highway Safety

9. Owen Road and Morecambe Road join some 50 metres to the north-west of the appeal property. The junction is traffic-light controlled and appears to be generally busy in nature. The advertisement itself would be directly visible as vehicles approach from both roads, but it would be partially screened from view by motorists travelling along Owen Road by reason of the existence of Chelsea Mews along the road frontage, and from Morecambe Road by reason of trees sited within a landscaped strip to the south.
10. The proposed advertisement display would effectively replace the existing advertisements, though would be significantly larger than both combined and would

be illuminated. I acknowledge that illuminated advertisements are intended to attract the attention of highway users and that change of images and levels of illumination could cause a momentary distraction to drivers of vehicles. However the frequency of the change of the advertisement proposed would be no less than 10 seconds and for many drivers it would not change during their passage along this part of the road. In any event, it would be highly unlikely to distract drivers or pedestrians to a degree that would result in harm to public safety, including to pedestrians crossing the road at the traffic light controlled junction. Finally, the degree of illumination can be controlled by way of a condition to prevent glare or other distraction to road users at night.

11. For the above reasons, I do not consider that the proposed advertisement would be harmful to highway safety, either to motorists or pedestrians. On this issue, therefore, It would not conflict with Policy DM21 of the LP.

Other Matter

12. The appellants contend that the proposed display, with 6 alternating advertisements, would be more environmentally friendly than frequent manual renewal of non-illuminated advertisements. I acknowledge that this may be the case as a generalisation, but the current advertisements do not appear to need changing on a regular basis and, in any case, this would not outweigh the harm to the visual amenities of the area of the somewhat over-dominant and uncharacteristic design, appearance and siting of the current proposal.

Conclusion

13. I find that the proposed advertisement would not be harmful to highway safety in the area, but would be harmful to the visual amenities of the surroundings of the appeal property along Owen Road. On this basis, it would conflict with Policy DM21 of the LP. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR