



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by A Walker MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 AUGUST 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/Z/25/3364182

Highways Land O/S Hospice 1C Hight Street, Walton-on-Thames KT12 1DG

- 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 Trueform Engineering Limited against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/3252.
 - The proposed advertisement is described as 'The panels include 75" digital LCD screens. The advertising changes every 10 seconds with static images in sequence. The panels are programmed to ensure they do not exceed 300cd.sq.m at night, the level recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. The luminance level changes down to this level at dusk, ensuring there is no bright glare. This is in line with other existing paper 6 sheet advertising which is seen in Surrey. The panels do not operate between 12pm and 5am to ensure minimal light impact and renewable energy is only used as necessary. All panels have a built-in sensor control system allowing the units to adjust to the ambient light levels. This means they require less light at night and more in the daytime depending on the weather conditions.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Regulations) require that advertisements be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The Council has not suggested that the proposal would affect public safety, and I see no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The Council have referenced development plan policies it considers relevant to this appeal, and I have taken these into account where they are material. However, powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 to control advertisements, may only be exercised in the interests

of visual amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. Consequently, the Council's policies have not by themselves been decisive in my consideration of this appeal.

6. The appeal site is situated on High Street adjacent to the crossroads with Hepworth Way, Bridge Street and Church Street within the town centre of Walton on Thames. The appeal site forms part of a busy commercial high street which is flanked by major retail units on both sides. There is an array of existing street furniture to the pavements either side of the highway, including lampposts, benches, bollards, post boxes, and litter bins, but these are either low in height, or of a slim profile, and are arranged in a co-ordinated fashion at regular intervals, such that they do not unduly detract from this attractive area of public realm.
7. Whilst the proposal would not disrupt pedestrian movement on the pavement, apart from its alignment, the proposed digital display would, through its size and appearance, be markedly out of keeping with the rhythm and consistency of the existing street furniture and would unduly detract from the spacious and largely uncluttered character of the public realm in this location.
8. The integrated digital display screen, capable of displaying several static images over time, would draw further attention to the freestanding display, and would be viewed in stark contrast to the static advertisements and signage serving the shops and businesses either side of the appeal site and within the wider street which are typical of the character and appearance of the area. This prominence would be the case even if the levels of illumination and the speed and frequency of image transitions on the display screen were carefully controlled.
9. Overall, even taking into account the busy commercial surroundings, and that there is existing street furniture present, I consider that the proposed digital display would be a visually obtrusive addition within this part of the public realm and therefore would unacceptably harm the amenity of the area. In accordance with the Regulations, I have considered the development plan so far as it is material. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with Policy DM15 of the Elmbridge Local Plan (2015) which seeks to amongst other things protect the quality and character of places in regard to the installation of advertisements.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has made reference to other digital signage within Surrey. Whilst the history relating to these advertisements is not before me, these examples relate to differing contexts to the appeal site due to their geographical locations. Therefore, they do not justify the appeal advertisement which would be harmful to the amenity of the area.
11. Whilst I note the merits of the scheme outlined by the appellant, including but not limited to facilitating Council messaging and providing advertisements for local businesses, these would not satisfactorily mitigate the harm I have identified. In any event, applications for advertisement consent can only be assessed in regard to amenity and highway safety.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A Walker

INSPECTOR