
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N5660/Z/25/3359779

400 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EX

- 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 the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
- The application Ref is 24/02984/ADV.
- The advertisement proposed is replacement of D48 digital display with a 5 x 7.5 m digital display

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 Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. Therefore, while the development plan policies referred to by the Council have not been decisive, I have taken them into account in my determination of the appeal.
4. The Council has not identified any concerns in respect of public safety. Having regard to the Regulations, the main issue therefore relates to amenity.
5. The Planning Practice Guidance sets out that in practice, 'amenity' is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement. Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic interest. Consequently, as the proposal is in a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) insofar as it relates to amenity in advertisement appeals.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. The site is within the Streatham Common Conservation Area (CA). The CA comprises of an eclectic mix of historic housing around the perimeter of the historic open space. It illustrates the piecemeal suburban development of Streatham as part of the expansion of London in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The CA is characterised by its diverse but harmonious mix of architectural forms, its historic buildings and features, mature trees and the verdant expanse of Streatham Common.
8. Streatham High Road where the appeal site is situated forms the western boundary of the Common. As befits a main route in London, it has a busy urban character, and it is enhanced by the spaciousness of the adjacent common. Opposite the appeal site is the War Memorial Gardens which is in a raised position facing onto to both the Common and Streatham High Road.
9. The appeal site is a grassed area of land directly adjacent to the highway, which is currently occupied by a free standing digital advertisement screen facing towards Streatham High Road. In addition to the existing advertisement, there are a further 2 large advertisements in this location. These are also free-standing and prominently sited to the rear of the footway and towards the front of similarly undeveloped land. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies that collectively these advertisements are in a conspicuous location at a key junction within the CA and are exceptionally harmful to the visual amenity of the common and the adjoining War Memorial Garden.
10. The proposed digital advertisement would be significantly larger and therefore more imposing than the existing advertisement. While it would be similarly read in conjunction with nearby advertisements, by virtue of its increased size and height it would be far more visually obtrusive and incongruous than the existing advertisement. Moreover, the overly large and overtly contemporary proposal would be a discordant feature in the context of the surrounding traditional built environment and against the backdrop of verdant mature tree canopies. The adverse visual impact of the proposal would be exacerbated by its prominent siting on Streatham High Road at the heart of the CA.
11. The display would detract from the amenity value of the roadside trees. It would add a further larger, intrusive, commercial sign into a high-quality verdant environment. Irrespective that the illumination levels would not exceed the current levels from the existing advertisement, the proposal would erode the character and appearance of the CA and detract from the wider views of the war memorial.
12. In reaching this view I am mindful of the existing advertisements in this general area. However, as these harm the character and appearance of the CA, they do not provide a justification for a proposal that would result in further harm to the visual amenity and character and appearance of the area.
13. My attention has also been drawn to a number of advertisements across the country that are adjacent to listed buildings or within conservation areas. Based on the evidence before me, these differ including in terms of their surrounding context and at least some relate to replacement advertisements of the same dimensions or would result in a reduction in the extent of signage. Therefore, as they are not directly comparable to the proposal, they do not provide a justification for the appeal advertisement which I have considered on its own merits.

14. Therefore, I conclude that, as the proposed advertisement would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, it would harm amenity. Although not determinative, the proposal would conflict with policies Q2, Q5, Q17 and Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2021) which among other things support the delivery of high-quality design which preserves the significance of heritage assets. Given my conclusion on this main issue, there is conflict with these Policies. It would also conflict with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to sustaining the significance of heritage assets and protecting the quality and character of places from poorly sited and designed advertisements.

Other Matters

15. I note that the scheme could be used for emergency messaging, and it could result in a reduction in the quantity of signage and a tidying up an area. However, this would not satisfactorily mitigate the harm I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. 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

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

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR