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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2025 by R Dickson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

### Decision L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 August 2025

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### Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/Z/25/3360715

### Carkeel Roundabout, Callington Road, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 6LF

- 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 Cornwall Council.
  - The application Ref is PA24/08625.
  - The advertisement proposed is the erection of new digital 48-sheet freestanding hoarding.
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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 Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. Therefore, while I have taken account of the policies that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

### Main Issue

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

### Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Callington Road, the A38 and the A388 meet at Carkeel Roundabout, a busy intersection. The area has an industrial and commercial character, with many businesses displaying static advertisements near to the roundabout. They range from tall totem signs associated with the petrol filling station and retail park, to smaller banner advertisements. In addition to advertisements, there is an obvious presence of traffic signals and signage and other street furniture in the area.
6. Although the area is predominantly commercial, there is mature greenery around most of the roundabout, verges and abutments, which partially screens the surrounding buildings. However, in the section around the appeal site and petrol filling station the only greenery is from the trees near to the roundabout on the

grass verge, which provide some screening of the petrol filling station and add softness to an otherwise stark industrial area. Beyond the roundabout, there are views across to open countryside.

7. The appeal site is located in front of the trees, on the grass verge near to the petrol filling station on Callington Road, adjacent to Carkeel Roundabout. The 48-sheet digital display advertisement would face the roundabout and would be placed in front of the trees, raised well above ground level. Together, the shop associated with the petrol filling station and the trees form the backdrop of the appeal site.
8. The display would be viewed by those using the roundabout and would be particularly obvious when travelling westward on the A38. Although there are taller totem advertisements near to the appeal site, the advertisement would be visually dominant given its height, width and proximity to the road. It would be a large addition to the area, the effect of which would be highlighted by the comparatively large size when seen against the shop unit behind, which is set on lower ground.
9. The placement of the advertisement in front of the trees would further erode the character and appearance of the area. The trees contribute an important softness and screening to this part of the roundabout, visually connecting to the greenery on and around the roundabout and the open countryside in the distance. The advertisement would disrupt this important connection in a location where there is little other vegetation, and would harmfully reduce the positive contribution that the trees make to the area.
10. The contribution of the trees would be further eroded by the need to prune back some branches to make room for the proposal. The proposal is also likely to limit their likely growth due to the need for regular pruning in future to prevent them from overgrowing the display. This harmful impact would not be mitigated by the wildflower planting proposed at the base of the proposed advertisement, which would only be low level. While the trees may not be subject to any protection, there is no substantive evidence before me that there is any intention to remove them, therefore I give this very little weight and it does not outweigh the harm identified.
11. There is a significant amount of visual clutter around the busy roundabout owing to the commercial and industrial character, in the form of existing advertisements, traffic signals and street furniture. The proposal would infill a gap where there are currently no structures. In this context, the introduction of another advertisement, particularly on the scale of the proposal before me, would harmfully the character and appearance of the area as it would add further visual clutter. The proposal would serve a different function to the surrounding advertisements, which are predominantly advertising services or facilities of the surrounding businesses. Instead, the digital advertisement would cycle through static advertisements, further drawing attention and detracting from the character and appearance of the area.
12. The appellant has provided two examples of internally illuminated digital advertisements in support of the appeal. While both were located at petrol filling stations, one of the advertisements granted express consent was significantly smaller than the scheme before me. The other scheme was for a smaller advertisement and a larger hoarding, but both were within the forecourt of the petrol station and the hoarding was seen against the end of the building, which the Council's officer report notes reduced its prominence. As such, the examples do not provide a direct comparison with the appeal scheme in terms of their visual

impact or context. They therefore carry limited weight in my recommendation and do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

13. I acknowledge that the digital display would be appropriately illuminated for the weather conditions and time of day, and that illumination and the nature and transition of advertisements could be controlled by condition. However, given the size and position proposed, it would still be an overly large and prominent addition which would harm the amenity of the area, and this harm would not be satisfactorily mitigated through use of conditions.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to amenity due to its size and positioning. I have had regard to policies 1, 2 and 12 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010 – 2030 and policies ENV2 and ENV3 of the Saltash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 which collectively seek to protect amenity. However, they relate to development, and as advertisements are not development in planning terms, they haven't been determinative. I have also taken into account paragraphs 8, 131, 135 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024. Given I have concluded that the proposal would harm amenity, the proposal conflicts with the Framework advice on advertisements.

### **Other Matters**

15. Digital signage of this type is commonly seen from roads and roundabouts so would not be an unusual feature for highway users to see. Nevertheless, the size and siting of the proposal could result in it drawing drivers' attention when they need to pay attention to the busy roundabout, to the detriment of highway safety. This impact could however be mitigated to an acceptable level through conditions to control the illumination, the nature of images and way in which they change, and to prevent display of images resembling traffic signs and signals. Consequently, subject to conditions the proposal would not prejudice public safety. The lack of harm in this respect does not however outweigh the amenity harm set out above.

### **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.

*R Dickson*

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.

*L McKay*

INSPECTOR