



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 AUGUST 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/Z/25/3364184

Highways Land O/S Hampton, 26 High Street, Weybridge KT13 8AB

- 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 Mr Sandash Punj (Trueform Engineering Limited) against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 2024/3254.
 - The advertisement proposed 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 Matter

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 appeal site is situated on Weybridge High Street, a busy commercial street with various shops and businesses occupying the units either side of the highway. The pavement on either side of the road is generally free from street furniture aside

from lampposts and bins at various intervals which creates a pleasant character and appearance to the area.

6. The proposed digital display, at some 2.6 metres tall and 1.14 metres wide, would form a substantial physical structure within the footway. Due to its size, appearance and prominent location, it would be an incongruous addition that would be markedly out of keeping with the spacious character of the public realm in this location. Contrary to the appellant, the absence of significant street furniture along this stretch of the street would exacerbate the visual impact of the display, as it would appear as an isolated and discordant structure within the street scene.
7. The function of advertising is to draw attention, and the introduction of brightly illuminated images on the proposed display would catch the eye, as is intended. However, the large, illuminated display would appear strident and intrusive in this location where illumination in the public realm is generally limited to street lighting necessary in the interests of public safety. Moreover, the proposal allows for regularly changing images to be displayed. Such regular changes to the images would serve to further emphasise the visual draw of the display. The proposal would therefore introduce advertising features that would be uncharacteristic, dominant, and visually intrusive in this prominent location. This 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.
8. While there are various forms of advertising on commercial premises close to the appeal site, the nature of those advertisements differs markedly from that proposed, specifically in respect of the overall size, position, and means of illumination. They are also generally attached to the businesses to which they relate and not freestanding in the street.
9. Attention has been drawn to other advertisement proposals that have been refused consent in the area. Specific details of these particular cases are not before me and, therefore, I cannot be sure that the circumstances were comparable to that of the appeal site. However, even if there were different levels of street furniture in those instances that does not alter my view that the advertisement before me would appear incongruous within its immediate surroundings.
10. Notwithstanding the assertion that digital displays such as the proposal are now commonplace on highstreets, this does not in itself justify their universal introduction. There is a digital advertisement screen on a bus stop at the opposing end of the street, but this is integrated into a functional piece of street furniture and is not an isolated unit. This aside, the presence of existing signage elsewhere would not mitigate the appearance of the proposed digital display or assist in assimilation of the proposed display into the context of the site in this case.
11. 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 that would harm the amenity of the area. The proposal would conflict with paragraphs 135 and 141 of the Framework, which require proposals to be sympathetic to the character of the local area and to consider the effect of advertisements on amenity.
12. In accordance with the Regulations, I have also considered the development plan so far as it is material. The proposal would conflict with Policies DM2 and DM15 of the Elmbridge Local Plan (2015) and Policies CS4 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core

Strategy (2011) which all seek to, amongst other things, protect the quality and character of places in regard to the installation of advertisements.

Other Matters

13. 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, the appellant accepts that the degree to which this would occur is uncertain at this stage. The appellant also references various benefits arising from a commercial agreement with Surrey County Council to install advertisement displays; however, there is no evidence as to how such benefits would directly accrue from the proposal, or to what extent. Neither of these factors would satisfactorily mitigate the harm I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. 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

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

K Savage

INSPECTOR