



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2025

by H Miles BA (hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 AUGUST 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/Z/25/3365124

Sainsburys, Bridgeway, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1HW

- 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 Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/3157.
 - The advertisement proposed is Advertisement Consent: 4 non-illuminated directional totem signs, 1 non-illuminated CHAdEMO charger totem sign and 2 non-illuminated smart charger header totem signs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to 2 non-illuminated directional totem signs located to the north of the roundabout (junction of Bridgeway and Portsmouth Road). The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to 2 non-illuminated directional totem signs, 1 non-illuminated CHAdEMO charger totem sign and 2 non-illuminated smart charger header totem signs within the car park at Sainsburys, Bridgeway, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1HW in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 2024/3157, and express consent granted for their display. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the decision notice and appeal form as this accurately describes the proposed development at an appropriate level of detail for this case.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (Framework) states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. I have assessed the appeal on this basis

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on amenity with particular regard to visual amenity, and public safety with particular regard to highway safety.

Reasons

Amenity

5. A total of 7 non-illuminated signs are proposed. Two signs would be located to the north of the roundabout (junction of Bridgeway and Portsmouth Road). These would be totem signs 0.8m x 0.6m, and around 2.7m high. They would be green with white text and an arrow and shaped with a pointed end (the roundabout signs).
6. The roundabout has highways directional signs at exits as well as chevrons and advertisements on the roundabout. At the junction with Bridgeway there is a road sign set within a green leafy backdrop on the western side. On the eastern side there is another road sign as well as a large, illuminated totem sign for Sainsburys which includes the store and concessions logos, signage to the store and the EV points, and petrol prices. There is a petrol station behind which has its exit close to the roundabout junction. It has no-entry signs on the road and just within the petrol station in this location. Overall, particularly on this part of the roundabout there is a commercial character with numerous signs and advertisements.
7. The proposed development would increase the number of signs in this already busy location. The proposed signs would be clearly seen from either the west or the east entrance to the roundabout and would be highly prominent. Together the advertisements would result in an overly cluttered appearance to this location, which would be harmful to visual amenity.
8. Therefore, the roundabout signs would have an unacceptable effect on amenity with particular regard to the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account policies CS10 and CS17 of the Core Strategy (2011) (CS) and policies DM2 and DM15 of the Development Management Plan (2015) (DMP). Together these seek high quality design from new developments which preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area, including with respect to Cobham, Oxshott, Stoke D'Abernon and Downside and require that advertisements do not harm visual amenity or result in undue clutter, amongst other things. As the proposal would harm amenity, it conflicts with these policies.
9. Within the car park, two further totem signs in the same design are proposed. In addition, 1 totem sign which is square, 0.6m x 0.6m in size, and 2.7m high is proposed also with a green background and white text. As well as two larger totem signs at 0.6m h x 2.7m wide with two pole supports at 2.9m high. These are in a similar design albeit larger. Three of the posts would include 0.3m x 0.3m signs indicating EV parking only (the car park signs). These signs would be located along the southern edge of the car park.
10. At present there are bollards, traffic signs, streetlamps and other poles as well as trees and planting on the southern side of the car park boundary, with further signage and items such as trolley park bays as well as the parking and moving cars themselves within the car park. These are spaced out within the large car park area. The area therefore has a distinct commercial appearance which includes modest paraphernalia. On the other side of the road, and separated by boundary treatment and rear gardens, there are two storey houses to Riverview Gardens with rear windows which face towards the car park.

11. The proposed signage would be a similar height to existing road signs and would be lower than the lighting. There would be a modest number of signs which would be spaced apart from one another within the context of the large retail car park. Taken together their scale and appearance would not be prominent in this setting and they would be appropriate to the commercial character and appearance of the car park area. As such, they would not be harmful to visual amenity. They would be likely to be visible from nearby properties including from their gardens. Nevertheless, given their modest scale and acceptable appearance for the reasons outlined above, there would not be harm to the amenity of these occupiers. As such, it would be in accordance with the development plan policies set out above in these regards.

Public Safety

12. The roundabout has three exits and is on a busy main road, close to the junction with the A3. This is therefore a location where drivers need to take more care. As set out above, there are already multiple signs on the roundabout, at the exits and to the adjacent petrol station.
13. The roundabout signs have a pointed end and include a white arrow graphic, with only a few words of message and are intended to direct motorists to EV points. However, they do not follow the guidance relevant to highways signs. They would be seen in the context of the existing highways directional signs and other advertisements to this roundabout. As such, taking into account the multiple existing signs, the proposed advertisements would lead to confusion with existing traffic signs and distract drivers' attention.
14. There are no distracting or illuminated features to the proposed signs. Whilst EV points are useful to some road users, the proposed signage is not an essential direction for motorists, and drivers seeking these facilities would be able to use the existing directions on the totem sign. Erroneous and last minute manoeuvres without the proposed signage are therefore unlikely.
15. Consequently, the roundabout signs would be harmful to public safety with particular regard to highway safety. I have taken into account Policy DM15 of the DMP which requires that consideration is given to advertisements' effects on public or highway safety. As the proposal would harm public safety, it conflicts with these policies.
16. Policy DM7 of the DMP mainly relates to access and parking provision, and policy CS25 of the CS mainly relates to sustainable transport and accessibility to services. As such, the policy set out above is more relevant to this main issue.
17. The car park signs would be located within the car park, where cars are travelling slowly and the signs would be away from the main road junction where more care is required. Due to this positioning, they would also not be mistaken for highways signage. Therefore, I do not identify harm with regard to public safety for the other five signs. As such, there would be no conflict with the development plan policies set out above in this regard.

Conditions and Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the car park signs would be acceptable. This element of the proposal is clearly capable of being implemented and then used for its

intended purpose without the other part and consequently is severable both physically and functionally from the roundabout signs. A split decision is therefore possible and appropriate. I will therefore grant planning permission for the car park signs and dismiss the appeal in relation to the roundabout signs.

19. The element of the proposal that I am recommending is approved, should be subject to the five standard conditions.
20. Consequently, for the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed in part and dismissed in part.

H Miles

INSPECTOR