



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **E Heron MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/H/25/3366675

Blue Planet Aquarium, Longlooms Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 9LF

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for express consent to display an advertisement.
 - The appeal is made by Blue Planet Aquarium against Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00736/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is an internally illuminated totem sign on the roundabout
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for the display of an internally illuminated totem sign on the roundabout at Blue Planet Aquarium, Longlooms Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 9LF, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00736/ADV, dated 7th March 2025. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the application form as this accurately describes the development, and I have simplified it to avoid repetition of the site address.

Background and Main Issue

3. I have determined this appeal on the basis of the Council's failure to determine the application for advertisement consent within the statutory timeframe. However, I have had regard to the Council's completed questionnaire and appeal statement insofar as they provide clarity that the Council would have refused advertisement consent on the grounds of amenity and would have raised no concerns on the grounds of highway safety. I find no reason to take a different view in relation to highway safety.
4. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a roundabout in a commercial setting. It is approached from Longlooms Road and provides access to the Blue Planet Aquarium visitor car park to the north, and several large car sales premises to the east and south. Many tall structures proliferate the street scene including lamp posts, vertical emphasis car premises signage, and numerous poles on the roundabout itself. A particularly

dominant feature is the car dealership totem sign to the east, which is significantly taller than any other advertising structures in the locality.

6. The proposed advertisement would comprise a freestanding pylon sign, 6.2 metres in height with a steel aquatic animals display bolted to the top. The logo, lettering and directional arrow would be internally illuminated. I am advised that the purpose of the signage is to indicate the location of the Blue Planet Aquarium for visitors.
7. The proposed advertisement would sit comfortably within this commercial setting where tall vertical features including car dealership signage of a similar scale, are part of the character and appearance of the area. Although the proposed advertisement would include illumination, this would be limited to particular elements of the sign and would not be out of place with other nearby illuminated logo signage.
8. I acknowledge that the area is free from similar advanced signage and the location of the proposal on the roundabout would increase its prominence. However, I consider that the advanced sign is necessary and appropriately located to direct visitors towards the Blue Planet Aquarium.
9. From my own site visit observations, the aquarium car park is not clearly indicated, and the building is set far back, such that it is not easily discernible from the road and roundabout. Furthermore, whilst only a snapshot in time, I noted that a significant number of cars were parked on the pavements and central reservation of the access road, impeding visibility towards the aquarium site further. From the appellant's evidence, this is a long-standing situation. Taking this into account, the roundabout location for the signage would assist in directing visitors to the correct location, and the illumination is appropriate, as I am advised that the aquarium opening hours are such that visitors may arrive in the dusk or dark, during winter.
10. Although not determinative, I have taken account of policy DM17 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (Local Plan Part One and Local Plan Part Two), as a material consideration. Amongst other matters, the policy requires that proposals respect the characteristics of the locality.
11. In conclusion, I find that in this specific situation the display would be acceptable having regard to the amenity of the area.

Conditions

12. The five standard conditions as set out in the Regulations will apply, as confirmed in the Decision paragraph.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR