
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2025

by Stuart Willis BA Hons MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1525/Z/24/3357098

Petrol Filling Station at 89 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford CM1 1RY

- 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 Chelmsford City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01239/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of illuminated advertising display stand.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of advertisement from the decision notice as this accurately reflects the proposal and is also used on the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on visual amenity, with particular regard to designated heritage assets.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located off a busy road in an area where there are a mix of uses and types of built form and features. There are a range of advertisements in the area of varying sizes and designs, including illuminated ones. Some of these are related to commercial sites, such as the petrol station itself and there is also a large road sign opposite the appeal site.

Lodge House to Friends Cemetery (Listed Building)

5. The Lodge House to Friends' Cemetery is a Grade II listed building. It is an early example of Frederick Chancellor's work, who has strong links with Chelmsford, having been its first Mayor and designed many other buildings. It is in an Italianate style with prominent semi-circle stone heads to windows and projecting eaves with expose rafter feet.
6. The building is located to the front of the plot with the cemetery behind. There is a wall around the front and side of the plot visible from Broomfield Road. This, mature vegetation and the set back of the property mean it is not overly prominent from Broomfield Road, although there are passing views near the appeal site.

John Keene Memorial Homes Conservation Area (CA)

7. The CA is a planned estate of almshousing properties located around a shared area of open space. There is a regularity to the appearance of the properties and their layout within this verdant space.

Chelmsford County High School for Girls (High School)

8. The High School is a non-designated heritage asset, being a building of generally traditional appearance with features such as sash windows and brick stringcourse. It is set back from the road behind areas of mature vegetation but is still a relatively prominent feature in the streetscene.

Assessment

9. There are numerous and varied forms of advertisements at the appeal site at present as well as street furniture nearby. However, those located near the pavement, and the other paraphernalia associated with the petrol station are generally located at the opposite end of the site frontage. There is more of a setback of features at the end where the appeal scheme is proposed.
10. While a 'coffee cup' advertisement was previously in a similar location to that of the appeal one, that was not present at the time of my site visit. There was a more open and softer feel to this end of the site due to the lack of features close to the road and the vegetation adjacent to the boundary wall.
11. As such, while it may not be intended to attract the attention of road users, the proposed advert would be located much closer to the road than existing advertisements at this part of the site. Although the proposal would be largely screened by the boundary wall on the approach from the Listed Building side, it would be far more prominent than the existing features at this end of the petrol station.
12. Such signs may not be untypical of forecourts, nevertheless, its position would appear somewhat fragmented from the other features and advertisements at this site. Its illumination would further draw attention to it. It would be an incongruous and disjointed feature at this end of the site creating clutter where there is currently a more open space.
13. Conditions relating to type or timing of illumination would not overcome the concerns with the position of the advertisement.
14. It is not clear what consent is or was in place for the coffee cup, whether it could be put back along with the proposed advert or what mechanism there would be to prevent this. Moreover, the 'coffee cup' does not appear to have been illuminated so it is materially different to this appeal proposal.
15. The heritage assets and the proposal would be seen in some of the same views and experienced together. The heritage assets are already experienced with such features in the wider context. The setting of all the heritage assets includes varied built form and features, including residential and commercial uses, such as the petrol station at the appeal site.
16. The setting of the Listed Building already includes the petrol station and its various paraphernalia and signage. However, the existing features near the shared

boundary are located further back in the petrol station site. Therefore, the immediate setting of the Listed Building, and how it is viewed and experienced from Broomfield Road is relatively free of distracting features. As above, the presence of the sign close to the boundary, would be discordant, introducing additional clutter. This would compete with, and detract from the appreciation of the Listed Building, more so with the advertisement being illuminated. This would result in harm from the proposal being within the setting of the Listed Building.

17. Unlike with the Listed Building, there is far greater distance between the proposed advert and the High School. While closer to the site, the CA is already experienced with other advertisements and signs, some of a greater scale and closer to its boundary. As such, there would be no harm from the proposal being within the setting of these heritage assets.
18. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would harm visual amenity, including regarding the Listed Building. It would fail to accord with the heritage, design and character protection aims of Policies S3, DM13 and DM23 of the Chelmsford Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) insofar as it is relevant.

Other Matters

19. Although closer to the road and a different type of illumination to those already at the site, the advertisement would not be harmfully distracting to road or pavement users as such features would not be unexpected at a petrol station. It would not be located on the pavement itself or cause any significant reduction in visibility for those travelling along the pavement, cycle lane or road. Therefore, there are no public safety concerns.
20. Several other examples of similar advertisements at petrol stations have been highlighted. However, while there are some similarities, none relate to this appeal site, many are a considerable distance from it, and some are for a different type and size advertisements. Consequently, they would be viewed in a different context to the scheme before me.
21. Various benefits of the scheme have been put forward. However, advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. There is no indication in the Regulations, the Framework or Planning Practice Guidance that any other factors can be taken into account for the proposed advertisement.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Stuart Willis

INSPECTOR