



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/Z/25/3370581

Winchester Service Station, Bar End Road, Winchester SO23 9NP

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Reference is 25/00940/AVC.
 - The proposal is the erection of a small format Advertising Display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement display on visual amenity.

Reasons

3. The Council refers to development plan policies. The Regulations require that decisions be made only in interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, development plan policies alone cannot be decisive, but I have taken them into account as a material consideration. The matter of impact upon public safety did not feature on the Decision Notice and I would agree that this is not an issue in this instance.
 4. The Appeal Site is located on a principal entry and exit to Winchester, Bar End Road. It is within the curtilage of a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) a retail unit, the usual associated constructions and a range of ancillary facilities and varied commercial signage including the normal PFS double-sided totem-style pricing and brand display. The surroundings are mixed-use in character; excepting the PFS and retail curtilage the scene is, however, relatively low key and attractive treed areas lie opposite and beyond to the south. The site is urban and not within a Conservation Area or National Park.
 5. The proposed small format single-sided advertisement display would measure 1.23m(w) x 2.4m(h) x 0.22m (d) with the bottom of the display located 0.41m above ground level. LCD digital technology would be used and would be capable of displaying 6 advertising campaigns at a time, sequencing every ten seconds. The display would be monitored and controlled remotely.
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Amenity

6. I would agree with the Appellant that the appeal scheme would be innocuous to travellers heading north into the town due to its blank rear, relative positioning and the fact that vans or mini-buses are often parked alongside. I would also agree that it would not be any direct line of sight from residential properties.
7. Where I do have concerns is for visual amenity seen northwards, people heading out of town. By the stage of reaching the PFS, and setting aside the clutter at the retail southern end of the site, the views and impressions are of an attractive backdrop. The rising treed ground lies not far beyond and draws the eye, the sense of a rural edge has increased across the road, and the only further commercial premises in direct view are low key and largely unadorned with advertisements. While the double-sided totem-style pricing and brand display does stand out the almost ubiquitous nature of these non-sequencing signs may go relatively unregistered to the passer-by. Furthermore, close to the base of this sign there was no paraphernalia, authorised or otherwise, evident to me which might be removed as part of a scheme.
8. In this context I am strongly of the view that an illuminated advertisement display of the scale, and in the position, proposed would be visually alien and appear as a less than low-key format in this relatively prominent location when travelling northwards. Even with restricted and variable luminance and limited light spread and the technical case put forward by the Appellant, it would undoubtedly be an eye-catching changing display to people within the area generally, during the day and in certain hours of darkness. The visual qualities of the area would diminish with this incongruous and obtrusive display feature. It would be relatively bold and appear as clutter with its immediate relationship to the main PFS sign and addition to all the other commercial paraphernalia and signage to be found within the wider curtilage.
9. In summary, the scheme would result in an unacceptable negative impact on amenity

Other matters

10. I have considered both the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance advice on advertisements and the factors embodied in these documents on matters such as economic and business encouragement. However, the Framework explains that control in the interest of amenity is valid where there would be appreciable impacts such as I have described.
11. Displays elsewhere are cited by the Appellant but these by reason of siting or form are different propositions from the appeal proposal to my mind. Furthermore, I am not convinced that any such examples should set a benchmark for appropriate illuminated advertisements in this location. In any event I must determine this case on its own merits. For this reason, I do agree with the Appellant that precedent is not an argument.
12. I recognise that illumination levels on the system are controlled automatically. I appreciate that planning conditions based on best practice could reinforce this were I minded to allow the appeal; but I find the proposed illumination, scale and cumulative clutter simply inappropriate for this location in aesthetic terms.

I acknowledge there are some positive points applicable over sustainability and that the arrangements could be made for local businesses, community announcements or public information.

13. These foregoing matters have some individual and cumulative benefit and I give them limited weight.

14. I have carefully considered these and all the other points raised by the Appellant. However, these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in respect of the main issue identified above.

Overall conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would be unduly detrimental to amenity. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR