



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 September 2025

by **Simon J Cater MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P1750/Z/25/3369587

4-8 Farnborough Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6AY

- 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 Gary Cockerill of Alight Media against the decision of Rushmoor Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00253/ADVPP.
 - The advertisement proposed is a new single illuminated 48-sheet digital advertisement display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council has drawn my attention to the policies it considers to be relevant to this appeal, and I have taken them into account as a material consideration where relevant. However, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance reiterate this approach.
3. Neither the Highway Authority, nor the Council, has raised an objection to the proposal in public safety terms, and I have no reason to disagree with this view. I shall therefore only consider amenity.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the appeal site and surrounding area including the setting of a Building of Local Importance and the South Farnborough Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site lies on the eastern side of Farnborough Road and comprises a car wash, with the proposed signage being located on the southern boundary. Farnborough Road connects the surrounding area to the town of Farnborough, with a surrounding mix of residential and non-residential uses, including an adjacent Holiday Inn which is a Building of Local Importance. The appeal site is bounded on three sides by the South Farnborough Conservation Area (Conservation Area), though it lies outside its designated boundary. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that I pay special

attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

6. The South Farnborough Conservation Area derives its significance from its coherent townscape of high-quality historic housing and public buildings, which contribute to the architectural and historic character of the area. The adjacent Holiday Inn, a locally listed Edwardian-era building within the Conservation Area, is significant for its scale, materials, and contribution to the architectural rhythm and the visual interest of Farnborough Road.
7. The appeal site lies within an area of mixed commercial uses, including a car wash and petrol station, and the hotel car park. However, it is close to the Holiday Inn building and has a low density of built form. This means that it currently has a neutral effect on the significance and setting of this building and of the wider Conservation Area
8. Although the site lies outside the designated boundary of the Conservation Area, it is visually prominent from within it, particularly along Farnborough Road where there is no physical separation between the site and the Conservation Area edge. The proposed advertisement would be readily noticeable within this setting, and its scale and illumination would appear incongruous and overly commercial in this sensitive context.
9. In particular, the advertisement would introduce a large, illuminated structure, and would stand as a visually assertive feature in a prominent townscape position. Its presence would materially alter the visual experience of the Conservation Area's edge and diminish the coherence of its setting. It would also add to existing detrimental signage and infrastructure, including directional signs, speed limit poles, and commercial totems, which are on or near the appeal site, resulting in cumulative visual clutter. As such, the advertisement would therefore undermine the coherent townscape and detract from the amenity of the area.
10. The advertisement would face a later extension of the Holiday Inn said to have limited architectural merit. Even so, the building remains a prominent heritage asset that contributes to the architectural rhythm of the area. The advertisement's height, bulk and illumination would introduce a visually assertive and elevated structure that would compete with and interrupt the appreciation of the building's form and prominence. Its commercial appearance and digital illumination would contrast with the building's historic character, diminishing its setting when viewed from Farnborough Road and adjacent public spaces.
11. The appellant refers to other appeal decisions where advertisements were permitted in heritage contexts, including near or within Conservation Areas and adjacent to locally listed buildings. These examples have been considered. However, each case must be determined on its own merits, and the assessment of amenity must reflect the specific characteristics of the proposal and its relationship to the surrounding area. In this instance, the advertisement would be introduced adjacent to a locally listed building and within the setting of the South Farnborough Conservation Area. Its freestanding and elevated form, combined with digital illumination and overly commercial appearance, together with the presence of street clutter, would differentiate from the other examples provided. The cited decisions do not establish a precedent that is directly applicable to this context, and they do not alter the conclusion that the proposal would cause harm to amenity.

12. Policy HE3 of the Rushmoor Local Plan 2014-2032, adopted February 2019, requires that advertisements adjoining Conservation Areas should be of a design, scale, illumination and siting that preserve the character and setting of heritage assets. For the reasons given above, the proposed advertisement would fail to meet these criteria.
13. Consequently, the proposed advertisement, would harm the significance of the adjacent Conservation Area as a whole, including the setting of the Building of Local Importance contrary to Policy HE3. On this basis it would not accord with the Act. Having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the advertisement would cause unacceptable harm to amenity.

Other Matters

14. While the appellant has identified commercial and operational benefits associated with the proposal, including sustainability and alignment with national advertising trends, these benefits would be relatively minor and do not outweigh the harm that I have identified to amenity.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Simon J Cater

INSPECTOR