

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025

by **N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/Z/25/3371842

Land at Marsden Road, Bolton, BL1 2PF

- 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 JCDecaux against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20304/25.
 - The advertisement proposed is 2x single sided 48 sheet internally illuminated sequential advertisement displays as shown in supporting documentation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The proposal is to replace a 12.8m x 3.4m and two 6.4m x 3.4m externally illuminated paper and paste advertisement hoardings with two internally illuminated LED advertisements. The planning application form states that the proposed new advertisement displays would measure 6.418m x 3.552m and would be raised 2.8m above the ground.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is situated in a prominent position alongside Marsden Road in close proximity to a major junction, where two busy highways and two other streets all intersect close to Bolton town centre.
 5. The surrounding area is mixed use, albeit the predominant use is residential. The appeal site is close to modern houses and flats in blocks of three-to-five stories in height, in addition to commercial buildings, comprising offices of two and three stories in height.
 6. The adjacent junction itself is large in scale and includes numerous pedestrian crossings. With the exception of an attractive traditional brick-built commercial building on the opposite side of Marsden Road to the appeal site, buildings tend to be set back from the junction and are separated from it by the presence of greenery.
 7. This provides for a pleasant sense of openness and spaciousness. Further, land rises to the north, away from the appeal site, and this provides for extensive views of Bolton's skyline, including the impressive and iconic Bolton Town Hall.
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8. From the northern side of the junction, the large existing 96-sheet advertisement can be seen, but it does not appear especially dominant in its surroundings. Whilst raised a small distance from ground level, it appears to reach only a modest height relative to nearby buildings, which include attractively designed new brick-built terraced dwellings. Further, its simple paper and paste design does not appear particularly strident, nor draw undue attention itself.
9. Similarly, from the western side of the junction, both the larger advertisement hoarding and the two smaller ones are visible, but they appear relatively modest in height, and their simple, unchanging (other than with new pasted advertisements) presence does not lead them to appear unduly dominant or intrusive. Rather, the eye is drawn by the presence of modern brick-built residential buildings, and other interesting and attractive buildings in the surrounding area.
10. Also, as one travels northwards along Marsden Road, away from Bolton town centre and towards the junction, the two smaller advertisements, which face directly across Marsden Road, appear unobtrusive and allow for an appreciation of the presence of the attractive commercial building opposite them, as well as a sense of entering a more residential area of the town.
11. The proposed development would replace the three advertisement hoardings with two new LED advertisement displays. The two proposed advertisement displays would be similar in size to the two smaller existing advertisements, and around half the width of the existing 96-sheet advertisement.
12. However, the proposed advertisement displays would be raised very considerably from the ground, such that they would reach a significantly greater height than the existing advertisements. I find that their overall height proposed would result in the advertisement displays appearing as overly dominant and obtrusive features.
13. The harm arising from this would be exacerbated as a result of the internal illumination and changing images provided by the LCD displays, such that the advertisements would appear unduly strident, drawing attention to their changing displays on digital screens, one of which would loom tall above Marsden Road, and one of which would loom tall above the adjacent junction.
14. The proposed advertisements would thus dominate their surroundings. This would especially be the case during lower light times of day, most notably during the winter months and during overcast days.
15. Further, whereas the existing smaller advertisements do not appear obtrusive as one travels away from the town centre along Marsden Road, the proposal would be positioned such that one of the screens would, due to its siting, height and bright, changing LCD display, appear so prominently as to draw attention to itself as an unduly dominant feature.
16. Consequently, the proposed advertisements would appear considerably more visually intrusive than the advertisements that they would replace, and I find that the proposal would be detrimental to visual amenity, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, to Policy TC11 of the Core Strategy¹ and to Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan (2024), which, together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

¹ Bolton Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2011).

Other Matters

17. The appellant, in support of its case, suggests the imposition of conditions to control the level of illumination. However, this would not alter the fact that the proposed advertisements would be of such a brightness as to draw attention to themselves, and that the changing digital images proposed would draw the eye.
18. The appellant also suggests a condition to prevent any display between midnight and 6am. However, such a condition would not prevent the proposed advertisement displays appearing unduly dominant at times when the majority of people are awake and active.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR