



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2025

by **P H Wallace BSc (Hons) DipMS MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/25/3368568

Petrol Filling Station, 37A Shooters Hill Road, Greenwich, Blackheath SE3 7HS

- 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 Ltd against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application Ref is 25/0960/A.
 - The development proposed is described as 1no D6 (digital advertisement) screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (The Regulations) to control advertisements, may only be exercised in the interests of visual amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors.
3. I note reference by parties to an Area of Special Character, however the evidence before me does not define its extent or relevance to the appeal site, and I have therefore given it no material weight in my decision.
4. Since the appeal was lodged, advertisement consent for a similar sign elsewhere on the site has been refused on appeal (Ref: APP/E5330/Z/24/3354798). I have taken this appeal into account insofar as it is relevant. All parties were notified and given the opportunity to comment on it and the Council submitted further written representations which I have had regard to.
5. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Main Issue

6. The parties agree that the proposed advertisement would not be detrimental to public safety and I observed nothing which would lead me to dispute this conclusion. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the advertisement on amenity, having regard to its siting in the conservation area and close to a listed building.

Reasons

7. The appeal concerns a freestanding digital advertisement display unit (measuring 1.23m(w) x 2.4m(h)) at a petrol filling station (PFS) on the north side of a lit carriageway, Shooters Hill Road.
8. The PFS has a commercial character. A canopied forecourt and convenience store, positioned toward the rear of the site, form its principal focus and include back-lit fascia signage and several smaller, non-illuminated advertisements. At night these features are apparent in the light cast by the under-lit canopy, which provides the primary illumination across the forecourt. To the west, the forecourt is more open and less intensively developed in appearance. A line of mature mixed boundary trees (evergreen and deciduous) in front of a boundary wall of moderate height affords partial screening while allowing views beyond the site. As the site tapers toward Shooters Hill Road, an internally illuminated totem sign with digital fuel-price displays and an adjacent wall sign are clearly visible from both the highway and the forecourt at the western edge of the site.
9. The site lies within the Blackheath Conservation Area (BCA), whose special interest derives from its spacious, tree-lined nineteenth-century streets and their relationship with the open expanse of Blackheath. The BCA boundary runs to the south of the site along part of Shooters Hill Road, beyond which lies a narrow strip of woodland. The PFS's commercial form, lighting and signage contrast with the prevailing domestic scale and architectural rhythm of the buildings fronting the north side of the road. In its current condition the site does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the BCA.
10. Immediately to the north-west of the site, and occupying a slightly elevated position, is No. 37 Shooters Hill Road (No. 37), a Grade II listed mid-nineteenth-century stuccoed suburban villa whose significance principally derives from its intact classical composition. It forms part of a coherent group of nineteenth-century houses, including two locally listed buildings immediately to the east of the PFS (No. 39 and No. 41), that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the BCA.
11. The appeal site forms part of No. 37's setting, providing the immediate foreground in public views and helping to frame how the asset is experienced in the streetscape. Public views are obtained across the western part of the site and through boundary tree planting; although the mature mixed trees offer some filtering, they do not materially obscure the building's principal form or architectural interest, which remains legible from the highway and forecourt.
12. The proposed digital display would be sited to the west of the forecourt, between the existing totem and the nearby wall sign, positioned in front of and parallel to the boundary wall and facing into the forecourt. It would be prominently visible from Shooters Hill Road. The display would show sequential static images at 10-second intervals with instantaneous transitions and would be illuminated in accordance with relevant industry guidance¹.

¹ Institute of Lighting Professionals: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (PLG05/23)

13. Its siting within public views that include No. 37 would introduce intermittent illuminated image changes and a degree of movement and visual emphasis that is absent from the historic streetscape. Whilst it would not be visible from No. 37, the animated and illuminated component would increase visual distraction in views towards the listed building. Even though it would not protrude above the existing boundary wall, the proposed digital sign would adversely affect how No.37 is experienced in its setting. The distance of the sign from No. 39 and No. 41, together with the intervening forecourt canopy, would mitigate any direct harm to the setting of these local heritage assets.
14. The introduction of an additional animated, illuminated element into public views would be at variance with the area's predominantly nineteenth-century domestic character. The effect would be accentuated by the siting away from the main PFS canopy, within a part of the site that has a more restrained visual quality. Although the sign would face away from the BCA, it would nonetheless intensify the commercial character of the site as perceived within the BCA and thereby harm its character, appearance and significance.
15. In considering whether the identified harm could be avoided or reduced through the imposition of conditions (for example, controls on luminance and hours of operation), I find that while such limitations would reduce overall prominence, the animated nature of the proposed display would still introduce movement and visual emphasis in views of No. 37 and within the BCA. On the evidence before me, and having regard to the nature and extent of the impact, I do not consider conditions would be sufficient to overcome its detrimental effects on the significance of the heritage assets.
16. Having considered the foregoing matters, I conclude that the proposal would harm amenity by failing to preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area and by diminishing appreciation of the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building through its effect on setting. I have taken into account Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Policies DH1, DH3, DH(f), DH(h) and DH(i) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014), which, amongst other matters, seek to protect and promote visual amenity within a historic context and are therefore material in this case. In light of the harm identified, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Conclusion

17. The proposed display of the advertisement would be acceptable in terms of public safety, however, for the reasons given I conclude that it would be detrimental to the interests of amenity, therefore the appeal is dismissed.

PH Wallace

INSPECTOR