
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 November 2025

by **T Bennett BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/Z/25/3371971

The Wicked Lady Ph, Nomansland, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8EL

- 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 JMDA against the decision of St Albans City Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/25/1233.
 - The advertisement proposed is 1off set of illuminated letters, 1off illuminated pictorial post sign, 1off illuminated Entrance sign, 1off illuminated Directional sign.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to sign D – directional sign.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to sign B – post sign at The Wicked Lady Ph, Normansland, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8EL in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 5/25/1233, and express consent is granted for its display. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

3. The advertisement consists of 4 signs, identified on the submitted plans as sign A – building letters, sign B – post sign, sign C – Entrance Sign and sign D – directional sign. The local planning authority made a split decision granting express consent for sign A and sign C. This appeal is concerned with the refused signage only, which is sign B and sign D.
4. Powers under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) to control advertisements may only be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and (b) any other relevant factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reiterates this approach. I have therefore taken Policy 34 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 (LP) into account insofar as it is material, but it has not, in itself, been decisive.

Main Issue

5. The Council raises no objection to the proposal on the grounds of amenity. On the basis of my visit and the evidence before me, neither do I. Accordingly, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on public safety.

Reasons

Sign D – directional sign

6. Sign D is a double-sided directional sign. It would be located adjacent to the carpark entrance of The Wicked Lady public house, which joins the B651 Wheathampstead Road to help direct customers into the car park.
7. Although the B651 is relatively straight in the vicinity of the appeal site, it is a 60mph road where vehicles move at high speeds. Whilst the appellant contends that the sign would be set back from the edge of the highway, the submitted block plan indicates it would be positioned on the narrow grass verge directly adjacent to the edge of the highway. Given the sign's relatively low height and approximate 1.6 metre width, in this location the sign may have the potential to obstruct the intervisibility between drivers exiting the carpark and other highway users.
8. In the absence of plans demonstrating achievable sight-lines from the entrance of the carpark alongside the location of the sign, I cannot be certain that sign D would not prejudice public safety.
9. The appellant states that the existing entrance is not well defined, leading to vehicles braking late to turn into the site, which they contend is causing a highway safety issue. I accept that directional signage could be useful for customers, but it has not been demonstrated that the proposed sign would not cause harm to public safety. Moreover, the Highways Authority confirms that there have been no reportable highway collisions within the vicinity of the site in the last five years. This argument, therefore, does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
10. Drawing the above together, I find it has not been demonstrated that acceptable levels of inter-visibility between drivers exiting the car park and other highway users could be achieved. Consequently, in the absence of information to indicate otherwise, I conclude that sign D would prejudice public safety.
11. Whilst the Council cites conflict with Policy 34 of the LP, that policy relates to development proposals which generate significant traffic or the creation or improvement of access. Given the nature of this proposal, the policy has therefore not been determinative.

Sign B – post sign

12. Sign B is a free-standing post sign and would also be located adjacent to the carpark entrance of The Wicked Lady public house, on the opposite side to Sign D.
13. Although the post sign would have a total height of 5 metres, the largest element, which details the pub's name, would be mounted approximately 3.6 metres high on top of a 12cm x 12cm post. Considering the modest dimensions of the post and the tall positioning of the largest element of the advertisement, the post sign would not obstruct the visibility of drivers exiting the carpark onto the B651, nor would it prevent other road users on the B651 from observing vehicles leaving the carpark. Accordingly, Sign B would not have an adverse effect on public safety.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard conditions set out in the Regulations, the Council has not indicated that any further non-standard conditions should be imposed. I consider no further ones are necessary.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal in relation to Sign B - post sign, is allowed. However, for the reasons set out, the appeal regarding Sign D – direction sign, is dismissed.

T Bennett

INSPECTOR