
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025 by A Morrison MTCP MRTPI

Decision by C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/Z/25/3368353

Land West of Skipton Road, Woodfield, Harrogate HG1 4LD

- 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 Elite Billboards against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is ZC25/00948/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a single digital billboard.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out that powers under those Regulations shall be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. Neither the Council nor any other party has raised any objection to the proposed advertisement from a public safety perspective, and I find no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Amenity is not defined within the Regulations, nonetheless the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out that relevant factors include the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.
6. The appeal site is located on Skipton Road / A59, a well-trafficked through route within Harrogate. This stretch of the road is primarily residential in character, comprising of two storey terraced houses punctuated with commercial and community uses.

7. The proposed advertisement site is positioned behind the security fenced frontage of a commercial forecourt, from which a car wash with a range of associated informal signage, was operating at the time of my site visit. Set in close proximity to the highway, the site is also immediately adjacent to the gable end and front garden of a neighbouring end terrace dwelling.
8. During my visit I observed a number of advertisements together with typical street lighting and furniture within the vicinity of the site. I noted that where intermittently present, advertisements were commonly related to the use of the premises on which they are sited. In addition, such displays were generally of a modest scale and not illuminated or digitised. As a result, these features did not appear out of character to their individual context, or that of the wider mostly residential street scene.
9. Facing onto south-bound traffic, the proposed internally illuminated digital billboard would be elevated above the boundary fencing on a freestanding structure of substantial scale. Owing to a combination of its highly prominent placement aside the frontage of the adjacent house, significant height and width and fully illuminated display, the wholly new advertisement would form a harmfully dominant and incongruous feature within the street scene. These characteristics would together result in it having an overwhelming presence in the locality, drawing unacceptable attention through its excessive proportions, pronounced siting and the incompatible nature of its changing display to its context. This appearance would be plainly at odds with both the general traits of those limited advertisements within the locality and its prevailing residential character.
10. I recognise that the proposed screen's illumination would be automatically adjusted by light sensors to ensure it would not be unduly bright at different times of day and note the appellant's suggested conditions to control the display. These restrictions would not however mitigate for the proposal's fundamentally overbearing overall presence, which would pay scant regard to the area's existing visual qualities.
11. The Harrogate Conservation Area boundary is approximately 50 metres to the north. The significance of the Conservation Area is derived from the evolution of Harrogate over many years and the architectural tastes and styles of the time. Whilst this designation is referenced in the Council's delegated report, it was not included as a reason for refusal within the decision notice. Given that the proposed screen would, at most, only be glimpsed from within the Conservation Area, I do not consider that the harm that I have identified would extend to the setting of this designated heritage asset.
12. However, in conclusion, the proposed advertisement would have a harmful effect on the amenity of the area. I have taken into account the requirements of the Framework together with Policy HP3 of the Harrogate District Local Plan 2014-2035 in so far as it requires development to incorporate high quality design that protects, enhances or reinforces local distinctiveness. Given that I have concluded that it would harm visual amenity, the proposal conflicts with this policy and the Framework.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that the appeal site is not located within any designated scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, however this is a neutral matter which does not weigh in favour or against the proposal. I also note that the digital display

would be made available to local businesses and appreciate the efficiency benefits associated with this type of modern billboard in comparison with traditional paper and paste. However, as the appeal proposal relates to advertisement consent, the Regulations only allow for the consideration of amenity and public safety, and in any event, such matters would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

14. I note the Council's second reason for refusal concerns the proposal's impact upon neighbouring residential amenity with specific reference to its brightness and changing content. The billboard would not produce any sound, and I have considered its impact in visual amenity terms above. Taking into account the PPG, the effect of the advertisement upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers is outside the scope of this appeal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Morrison

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR