
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2025

by **S Sharp BSc(Hons) BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/Z/25/3366400

85 Church Road, Bristol BS5 9JR

- 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 Wildstone Estates Limited against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application reference is 25/10414/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of one D48 advertisement display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach.
3. The Council has referred to policies in its development plan document. All but part of policy DM29 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014), relate to proposals for development. Advertisements are not development, but I have noted that there is content within the policies relevant to amenity and public safety considerations. These matters have been considered in my assessment.
4. I visited the site and its environs on 2 occasions, during daytime and in the evening following nightfall.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the advertisement on: -
 - Highway (public) safety.
 - The amenity of the area.

Reasons

Public safety

6. The PPG states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention and establishes that advertisements in locations where drivers need to take more care, are more likely to affect public safety. The PPG also lists the main types of

advertisements which may cause danger to road users. They include those that would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view. They also include illuminated advertisements, which because of their size or brightness, could distract road-users, or those subject to frequent changes of the display.

7. The appeal proposal would be close to a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing, a bus stop, and junctions with side roads, such as Heber Street. Church Road is also a busy main road, subject to on-street parking. The advertisement would be of a substantial size and imagery would change frequently. It would be visible to motorists as they approach the pedestrian crossing from the direction of Bristol city centre and when they are very close to the bus lane, parked cars and the junction with Heber Street. As such motorists would need to be very aware of their surroundings. Therefore, I could not be certain that the proposed advertisement would not be a distraction to drivers on Church Road, where stationary or slowing traffic and pedestrians within the carriageway may be encountered.
8. Although the levels of luminance of the display could be controlled and would not exceed the guidance set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals, the advertisement would be highly likely to draw motorists' attention which would cause a distraction. It is the complexities that the motorist will face in this specific location and the resultant cognitive demands that mean avoiding distraction is of great importance to secure public safety.
9. The appellant has brought to my attention another appeal decision and consents including within Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council areas. However, the characteristics of the areas around these sites materially differ from that under consideration.
10. I therefore find that the proposed advertisement would lead to the potential for increased conflict between road users. Consequently, it would therefore have a harmful effect on public safety, contrary to the provisions of the Framework and guidance within the PPG, which seek to control advertisements in the interests of public safety.

Amenity

11. The appeal site is located on the northern side of Church Road in a built-up area of Bristol beyond the city centre, characterised by a mix of commercial and residential uses. There is a wide variety of building heights, forms, materials and ages evident in the area. There are also a significant number of advertisements including those relating to and attached to commercial premises, as well as multi-sheet poster panels. Most of these advertisements are not illuminated.
12. I observed that the area is also characterised by illumination from street lighting columns, traffic signals, vehicle lights on Church Road, and from within occupied buildings. The artificial light sources, wide spectrum of colours, regular vehicular movements along Church Road, as well as the signals changing at the pedestrian crossing, inform my finding that the nature of the proposed display would not harm the visual amenity of the area.
13. I note concerns about light pollution emanating from the proposed display and its effect on living conditions. Specific concerns are about nighttime impacts on occupiers of dwellings in the area. During the late evening, I observed that traffic flows were less than during daytime, but the area remains characterised by

illumination. This observation was just a snapshot in time in terms of traffic flow, but I have no reason to believe that what I observed was not typical for the road. In this context, the illumination from the proposal would not result in demonstrable levels of harm to the living conditions of residents in the area.

14. Overall, the proposal would not be an incongruous or intrusive addition to the townscape and will result in no harm to the character and appearance of the area or harm to the living conditions of nearby residents. As such there is accordance with the criteria of policy DM29 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014), which specifically relate to advertisements.

Other Matters

15. I have also had regard to the matters cited as benefits by the appellant in their Statement of Case. They relate to potential energy savings, reduced trips to the appeal site, use of the display for charitable campaigns and public art, and/or the potential for increased business rates to the Council. No evidence is before me to conclude that these considerations are related to the matters of amenity and public safety or would outweigh the unacceptable levels of harm that I have identified.

Conclusions

16. For the reasons set out above, although I have found no harm to the amenity of the area, the proposed advertisement would be harmful to public safety. Therefore, I conclude the appeal is dismissed.

S Sharp

INSPECTOR