
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2025 by Kim Vo MPLAN

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/Z/25/3364089

Highways Land Opposite Lion Shopping Park, Oriental Road, Woking GU22 8BD

- 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 Mr. Sandash Punj of Trueform Engineering Limited against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2025/0047.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as “The panels include 75” digital LCD screens. The advertising changes every 10 seconds with static images in sequence. The panels are programmed to ensure they do not exceed 300cd.sq.m at night. The panels do not operate between 12pm and 5am. All panels have a built-in sensor control system allowing the units to adjust to the ambient light levels.”
-

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 Matters and Main Issue

3. I have omitted additional narrative wording from the description of development above for clarity and relevance purposes, albeit taken it into account. It does not change any element of the appeal scheme and so would not affect the ability of the main parties to make their cases in respect thereof.
4. The Council has referred to development plan policies, and I have taken them into account as material considerations, since the power to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The policies alone have not been decisive. The Council do not have concerns regarding public safety, and I have no reason to disagree. Therefore, my recommendation focuses on the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity, which is the main issue.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a section of grass verge forming part of a wider open green space with a group of mature trees. It is located adjacent a roundabout at the junction of Oriental Road and Maybury Hill, both of which are well-trafficked routes through Woking. The surrounding area has a mixed character, with the appeal site adjoining residential dwellings, which are adjacent a retail park, a petrol station and

offices. In this context, the undeveloped greenery of the verge acts as a visual buffer that reinforces the residential character on this side of Oriental Road, distinguishing it from the commercial areas and active highways.

6. In the vicinity of the appeal site, there are large totem signs, a digital highway information board, fascia, banner and freestanding signs. Whilst this contributes to a commercial setting, they are positioned on existing retail units, or within commercial boundaries and separated from the appeal site by the existing highways. A variety of street furniture is also present. However, the proposal would be viewed within the context of the verge, which is uncluttered and limited to streetlights, signage and low level post and chain fencing to the perimeter. Whilst there are some tall trees and traffic signs, these are of a slim profile.
7. The trees to the rear would remain. However, the proposed advertisement would be prominently sited on the outer edge of the grass verge and would dominate views of the site, reducing the quality of the positive contribution the greenery makes to the street scene. Its footprint would be modest, and its scale would be smaller compared to the adjacent totem sign and digital highway information board. Nevertheless, its tall form, combined with modern, internally illuminated panels on both sides and regularly changing imagery would result in a sharp contrast against its verdant backdrop. Whilst the proposal includes a green roof, this would be confined to a small area to the top only. The majority of the structure would remain as a dark-coloured frame. Given its siting, scale and digital appearance, the proposal would introduce a discordant element into a grass verge that is currently free from illuminated advertising.
8. Such advertisements are commonplace across the UK, and the verge is not of any special historic, scenic, architectural or cultural interest. Even so, the proposal would appear isolated and unrelated to its setting, unacceptably detracting from the cohesiveness of the residential character on this side of Oriental Road. Moreover, whilst the existing post and chain fencing would restrict public access, its low height would still result in the proposal appearing as a highly conspicuous feature from numerous public viewpoints.
9. With this and the above in mind, the advertisement would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area and would fail to comply with the 2007 Regulations. It would be contrary to the aims of Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012 and Policy DM18 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2016, as far as they are material to the main issue. These policies seek, amongst others, for advertisements to have regard to its effect on the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood, and for all development proposals to make a positive contribution to the street scene, the character of the area and local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

10. The appellant is willing to accept conditions pertaining to maximum luminescence, incorporating sensors for brightness and restrict operation between 00:00 and 05:00 hours. This would not satisfactorily overcome the concerns I have set out, which extend to wider matters. Of the benefits cited, there would be some from the potential revenue generated to support highway maintenance and improvements; discounted advertising rates for local businesses; provision of free space for public interest messaging; emergency messaging; and through the green roof providing a

small habitat. However, these are either speculative, minimal, or potentially achievable through less harmful means. As such, they carry only very limited weight and would be insufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified, putting aside the scope of the regulations as I have set them out.

11. In regard to appeal reference 3236410 for the erection of a digital advertising display near to the appeal site, I have not been passed full details albeit note the proposal in that case was for a larger unit of a different design than the appeal scheme and it was also dismissed. It therefore neither forms part of the visual context for the appeal scheme nor leads me to recommending it be allowed, owing to the harm I have found.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. Due to the harm I have found to amenity, the proposed advertisement is not acceptable under the aforementioned regulations. I therefore recommend the appeal be dismissed.

Kim Vo

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR