
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/25/3364092

Highways Land Outside HM Coroners Court, Outside Coroners Court, Station Approach, Woking GU22 7AP

- 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/2025/0046.
 - 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.”
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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 Matters and Main Issue

3. I have omitted additional narrative wording from the description of development above for clarity and relevance purposes but 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’s reference to the development plan is noted albeit I have taken it into account as a material consideration given the power to control advertisements may be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety only. 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 of the appeal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a section of a grass verge, forming part of the open frontage to the two storey HM Coroner’s Court building. It is on a prominent corner plot, where the well-trafficked routes of Heathside Crescent and Station Approach meet. Despite the adjacent highways, the area is uncluttered, with minimal signage

and street furniture limited to bicycle stands, a bench, streetlights, bollards, traffic and directional signage, and shallow steps with railings. Together, these elements positively influence the character and appearance of the area, creating a pleasant and spacious public realm that highlights the court building as a focal point.

6. The proposed advertisement would be positioned away from the main pedestrian routes but prominently sited on the grass verge within the court building's frontage. Although its footprint would be modest, its tall form, combined with modern, internally illuminated panels on both sides and regularly changing imagery would make it visually striking. Given its siting, scale and digital appearance, the structure would appear as a dominant and discordant feature in the street scene. It would also unacceptably erode the open and spacious quality to the public realm, which is currently free from illuminated advertising.
7. Such advertisements are commonplace across the UK, and neither the building nor its frontage are of any special historic, scenic, architectural or cultural interest. Even so, the proposal would stand alone in a contrived and unconnected manner, thereby detracting from the character and appearance of this civic setting.
8. Whilst the proposal includes a green roof, this would be confined to a small area to the top of the unit. There are many modern multi-storey buildings in the area. However, these are in primarily residential use and are concentrated on the opposite side of the road, separated from the appeal site by the highway. They contribute to a contemporary feel in the wider sense but given their substantial scale and distance from the appeal site, they are clearly distinct from the smaller court building and its frontage.
9. With this and the above in mind, the proposed advertisement would be harmful to the amenity of the area and would fail to comply with the 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 seek, amongst other things, for advertisements to have regard to their effect on the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood.

Other Matters

10. The advertisement would have luminance levels as recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals and incorporate sensors to adjust brightness. It would also be restricted from operating during early morning hours. Any planning conditions seeking to secure these controls would not satisfactorily overcome the concerns I have set out, which extend to matters beyond what they would be able to influence.
11. There would be some benefits 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, they are either speculative, minimal, or potentially achievable through less harmful means. As such, and putting aside the limitations of what can be considered under the regulations, they carry only very limited weight and would be, should they be relevant, insufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. Due to the harm I have found to amenity, the proposed advertisement would not be 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