



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/25/3364086

Highways Land Opposite Victoria Gate, Victoria Way, Woking GU21 6JD

- 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/2025/0048.
 - 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. I have however taken it into account. It does not change any element of the appeal scheme, nor would it 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 Council do not have concerns regarding public safety, and I have no reason to disagree. My recommendation focuses on the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a section of pavement along Victoria Way, a well-trafficked A-road and dual carriageway. It is within an area of mixed character, influenced by the proximity of existing dwellings next to Woking’s town centre. The outer edge of the pavement is defined by a continuous line of metal bollards, with some tree planters, extending from the subway up to the Brookhouse Common. This linear arrangement defines the frontage of the apartment buildings, which

feature a traditional design, contrasting with the more contemporary buildings on the opposite side of the road. These distinctions reinforce the residential character on this side of Victoria Way, separating it visually and functionally from the adjacent commercial uses and the active dual carriageway.

6. The wider area contains a variety of street furniture. However, these are primarily concentrated at the road intersection. The proposal would be viewed within the context of the footway, which is uncluttered and limited to metal bollards, bicycle parking stands, railings and tree planters, all of which are low level. Whilst there are some tall trees and traffic signs, these are of a slim profile. These existing items therefore allow long range eye level views up and down Victoria Way, where these views are a defining and positive characteristic of the footpath and public realm.
7. The advertisement would align with the existing metal bollards but be prominently sited on the outer edge of the footway, in front of the apartment building. Although its footprint would be modest, its tall form would disrupt and obscure the continuous views along the footpath. The proposal includes a green roof. However, this would be confined to a small area to the top of the unit. The majority of the structure would remain as a dark-coloured frame with modern, internally illuminated panels on both sides displaying regularly changing imagery, resulting in an intrusive structure to the street. The materials would be similar to the nearby modern buildings, but the unit would contrast sharply with the light façades of the traditional apartment blocks and the surrounding greenery against which it would be viewed.
8. Given its siting, scale and digital appearance, the proposal would present as a discordant and dominant element within a footpath that is currently free from illuminated advertising. Such advertisements are commonplace across the UK, and the footpath is not of any historic, scenic, architectural or cultural interest. Even so, the proposal would appear isolated and unrelated to its surroundings, detracting from the quality of the cohesive residential character on this side of Victoria Way.
9. With this and the above in mind, the advertisement would be harmful to the amenity of the area, failing 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 seek, amongst other things, for advertisements to have regard to their effect on the visual amenity of the immediate neighbourhood.

Other Matters

10. The proposed 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 between 00:00 and 05:00 hours. While the appellant is willing to accept planning conditions to secure controls, they would not satisfactorily overcome the concerns I have set out, which extend to wider matters.
11. Of the benefits put forwards, there would be some arising 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 benefits 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 above mentioned regulations.

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