
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2025

by **C Housden BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/H/25/3371541

Primrose Hill Service Station, Primrose Hill, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 8HR

- 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 Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application ref is 25/0796/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of a double-sided D6 small format advertisement display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the Development Plan policies cited in the evidence, but only in so far as these are material to amenity and public safety considerations.
3. As part of the appeal, the appellant has submitted a Highways Technical Note¹, which includes a plan showing visibility splays. I am satisfied that this new information would not evolve the proposal or fundamentally change it from what was originally under consideration by the Council. Furthermore, the Council has had the opportunity to comment upon these documents as part of the appeal. I am therefore satisfied that there are no procedural or substantive reasons not to accept this information. I have made my decision on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - public safety, with particular regard to highway and pedestrian safety; and
 - amenity, with particular regard to the character and appearance of the area.

¹ By Axis dated August 2025

Reasons

Public safety

5. The appeal site comprises a petrol filling station and associated retail unit situated in a corner plot between Water Lane and Primrose Hill. It has a covered forecourt area with vehicular access to both Water Lane and Primrose Hill. A verge covered in soil is situated directly adjacent to the vehicular access to Primrose Hill which is where the advertisement is proposed to be located.
6. In relation to pedestrians, the appellant has provided a plan which shows a 2.0m x 5.0m area of visibility that a driver in an egressing vehicle would have to the footway crossing that would not be obstructed by the digital advertisement. It therefore follows that drivers would continue to have sufficient visibility of pedestrians and I am therefore satisfied that the evidence demonstrates that, in relation to pedestrians, the proposal would not result in harm to public safety.
7. The appellant has also provided a plan showing multiple vehicle visibility splays to the left side of a driver egressing into Primrose Hill. Two of the splays are measured to the nearside kerb, one on the basis of the recommended stopping distance as set out in Manual for Streets for a 20mph road and the other for a 30mph road. The plan also shows the visibility splay for a 30mph road but measured to the centreline.
8. In the first instance, the appellant contends that whilst Primrose Hill is a 30mph road, a shorter splay that is used for 20mph roads would be appropriate on the basis that they consider it is likely cars in the area travel at slower speeds than the speed limit. This is due to the road layout which includes the nearby staggered crossroads and the carriageway alignment of Primrose Hill and Station Road. However, this position is not supported by any quantitative evidence, such as speed survey data.
9. Whilst I noted the local road layout and carriageway alignment on my visit, this is not sufficient information to be able to definitively conclude that vehicles predominantly travel sufficiently below the 30mph speed limit to justify the shorter splay. Based on the evidence before me, I cannot conclude that the use of the shorter splay would provide sufficient visibility and not have adverse impacts on public safety.
10. In relation to the 30mph splays, the plan shows that when the Y distance is measured to the nearside kerb the proposed advertisement would interfere with the splay, however, when measured to the centreline the splay would be clear. As such, the appellant accepts in their evidence that views of oncoming traffic approaching from the left would only be restricted by the proposal in the event of an oncoming vehicle crossing the centre line.
11. The carriageways of Primrose Hill are not physically separated. Whilst there are broken white lines demarking the separate sides of the road, there is nothing to prevent vehicles from crossing the centreline into the adjacent carriage. The evidence does not demonstrate why an oncoming vehicle crossing the centreline would be of such an unlikely manoeuvre that relying on the centreline splay for visibility, where views of such vehicles would be blocked by the proposed advertisement, would not result in an adverse effect on the safety of road users.

Without such justification, I cannot rely on the centreline splay to ensure that there would be no adverse impact of the proposed advertisement on public safety.

12. In relation to the 30mph visibility splay measured to the nearside kerb, the proposed advertisement would interfere with this splay and would block the visibility of drivers egressing from the forecourt. It therefore could not be relied upon in order to ensure the safety of road users.
13. As such, the evidence does not show that the proposed advertisement would not adversely affect the visibility of drivers egressing from the petrol filling station into Primrose Hill.
14. The appellant suggests that drivers could move their vehicles onto the crossover before committing to a manoeuvre. However, I note the location of the vehicle on the visibility splay plan means that any additional forward movement would put the front of the vehicle into the carriage of Primrose Hill which I do not consider to be an acceptable alternative to a clear visibility splay.
15. The appellant has also suggested that the visibility splay is already interfered with by cars parked along Primrose Hill near to the proposed location of the advertisement. However, the proposed advertisement would be a taller and permanent blockage of visibility, which is not the case for cars which can be moved leaving times where the splay is not interrupted. As such, this does not convince me that the advertisement is acceptable or justify the harm to visibility resulting from the proposal. In any case, on my site visit I observed that double yellow lines had now been painted on the road and no cars were now parked near the access into Primrose Hill.
16. Similarly, whilst there are existing temporary and flag style advertisements, the proposal would be of greater bulk and mass and would be a permanent blockage. Therefore, the existence of these other advertisements would not justify the permanent blockage of visibility caused by the appeal proposal.
17. The appellant also provided photographic evidence showing that up until recently, the appeal site was also used as a vehicle servicing and MOT centre where cars historically had parked in the location of the proposed advertisement. It is also identified that data shows that between 2019 – 2023 there was only one accident which occurred approximately 130m north of the appeal site. I have already addressed why parked cars are not directly comparable to the effect of the appeal proposal on visibility. Furthermore, the lack of recorded crashes within the vicinity of the appeal site and its previous historic arrangement does not justify introducing a permanent blockage to the visibility of drivers egressing the current site.
18. It has also been identified that soft landscaping was approved through the re-development of the site in the location of the proposed advertisement. At the time of my visit there was no vegetation planted in this location. I have only been provided with an unscaled extract of the approved landscaping plan, and I do not have any information regarding the height of this landscaping. I therefore cannot be certain how comparable the effect the landscaping would have on visibility compared to the appeal proposal. It therefore does not persuade me that the appeal proposal is acceptable or otherwise justify the harm that I have identified in respect of the scheme. In any case, each proposal should be assessed on its individual merits which I have done so in this case.

19. As such, whilst I have found that the proposal would not adversely affect visibility in relation to pedestrians, the appeal proposal would unacceptably impede the visibility of drivers egressing from the forecourt in relation to oncoming traffic approaching from the left. This would result in significant harm to public safety.
20. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy CP10 of the Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy (2011) (CS), in so far as it is material to the appeal proposal. This policy, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure proposals provide safe means of access.

Amenity

21. The appeal site comprises a commercial petrol filling station with associated retail unit. The site has a tall cover over the forecourt, along with a large sign displaying fuel prices and various other smaller signages across the site. It is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial development which gives the area a mixed character and appearance.
22. Whilst the advertisement would be situated opposite residential properties, the context of the proposed advertisement within the streetscene would be heavily influenced by the petrol filling station and retail unit. The height, bulk and mass proposed by the advertisement would be in keeping with the scale of the development situated within the wider site. Furthermore, the luminance and sequencing of the advertisement would be controlled through conditions to ensure that the effect of the digital display would not be intrusive within the streetscene. As such, the proposal would appear visually in keeping with the commercial site and wider mixed character and appearance of the area and would therefore not be harmful to amenity.
23. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the CS in so far as they are material to the proposal. These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development protects and enhances the built environment and has regard to the local context and conserves or enhances the character and quality of the area.

Other Matters

24. Regulation 3(1) and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) are clear that advertisements are subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. As such, whilst the appellant has highlighted a variety of social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposed advertisement, there is no indication in the Regulations or the Framework that any of these other factors can be taken into account.
25. Photographic examples have been provided of a range of digital advertising displays that have been granted consent at petrol filling stations throughout the country. However, I have been presented with very limited context of the exact circumstances of these examples and if they are directly comparable to the appeal before me. As such, I cannot afford them any weight in favour of the proposal. In any case, I have assessed the proposal on its individual merits.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Housden

INSPECTOR