



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2026

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 6 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/G2625/Z/25/3369578

Existing Advertising Hoarding North of Junction of Hellesdon Hall Road and Sweet Briar Road, Norwich, NR6 5BD

- 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 David Galbraith, Inschool Media, against the decision of Norwich City Council.
 - The application Ref 25/00567/A, dated 20 May 2025, was refused on 18 June 2025.
 - The advertisement proposed is the replacement of the existing 96 sheet paper advert by a 96 sheet size digital poster.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The proposal is the replacement of the existing 96 sheet size paper advertisement sited adjacent to the Hellesdon Hall Road/Sweet Briar Road junction on the Norwich Ring Road with a digital poster. The advertisement would be the same size as now, about 12 m wide and 3 m high, but mounted slightly higher than now about 2.5 m above the ground. Most importantly, instead of being a non-illuminated static display it would be digital, illuminated at night and with regularly changing content¹.
4. Norwich Ring Road, at this point the A140, carries heavy traffic volumes with the advertisement concerned adjacent to the traffic light-controlled Hellesdon Hall Road crossroads. In this vicinity, although mostly tree-lined, the ring road passes through an area of large-scale commercial buildings with a Wickes retail store and its large-scale signage opposite the site. As such the Council do not object to the proposal on visual amenity grounds.
5. However, the close proximity of the traffic lights raises highway safety concerns. The 12 m long advertisement runs alongside the southbound A140 carriageway behind a narrow grass verge up to and just beyond the stop line for the traffic lights. Whilst situated to one side, in this position the large scale regularly changing advertisement would be distracting for drivers approaching the lights or queuing at the point where they should be focussed on the traffic lights and other road users,

¹ Whilst not explicit within the application, the Council's assessment is on the basis of 'constantly changing advertising', and the appellant's appeal statement does not dispute this.

including pedestrians using the signalised crossing facility on this arm of the crossroads. For pedestrians using this crossing facility from the direction of the Wickes store, the digital advertisement would be directly behind the signal heads, distracting from and adversely affecting the visibility and interpretation of the cross/wait sign as the advertisement display changes.

6. For drivers approaching the traffic lights from the west along Hellesdon Hall Road, the changing digital advertisement set to one side behind the lights would be similarly distracting. Furthermore, when turning left the advertisement would be seen directly behind the pedestrian crossing facility where pedestrians may be trying to cross despite a 'wait' sign. In both cases drivers may momentarily attempt to read the advertisement rather than concentrate on the road causing a danger to other highway users.
7. Thirdly, on the approach from the south the advertisement would be seen at an oblique angle making it hard to read until relatively close to the traffic lights or when driving past further on. Again, the changing advertisement would be a source of distraction for drivers.
8. The existing advertisement is simply part of the street scene that is easily seen by drivers and other road users. Due to its static nature, it results in no element of surprise and therefore causes no distraction for drivers. By contrast, the regularly changing advertisements with their variable colours and wording would potentially lead to distraction and lack of attention at a traffic light-controlled junction which already has an accident record – two slight injury accidents being recorded in the last five years.
9. The appellant points out that consent has recently been granted on appeal for a similar digital advertisement further round the ring road on Miles Cross Lane². However, the advertisement in that case adjoins a straightforward section of ring road with no light-controlled junction nearby and no highway safety concerns were raised.

Conclusion

10. For these reasons the proposed advertisement would raise highway safety concerns and potentially a danger to road users in conflict with one of the objectives of the advertisement regulations. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

² APP/G2625/Z/22/3313069