
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2026

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/H/25/3375642

Unit 1, Fairfield House, New Craven Gate, Leeds LS11 5NF

- 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 Matt Swindles (Global) against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03330/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is “Replacement and upgrade of an existing 48 sheet internally illuminated poster hoarding with a 48 sheet digital display, measuring 3.448m high x 6.496m wide”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Advertisement Regulations require decisions to be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, having regard to any material considerations. The development plan policies and guidance referred to by the parties are not determinative, but I have taken them into account where relevant to the matters under consideration.
3. A previous appeal decision dated 14 July 2020 (APP/N470/Z/20/3250318) allowed an almost identical digital display at the same site. Although that consent has lapsed, it forms part of the relevant background, and I have had regard to it in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the digital advertisement display on i) amenity, and ii) public safety, with particular regard to highway safety.

Reasons

Amenity

5. The appeal site lies in an elevated position alongside the M621. A static hoarding of similar dimensions as the proposal is already in place. The wider surroundings include commercial buildings and substantial highway infrastructure.
6. Since the 2020 appeal decision, a large portrait-format digital advertising screen has been installed approximately 100 metres to the south-east. Irrespective of whether the previous Inspector was aware of the consented display, they expressly stated that it was not taken into account in their assessment. However, its presence

is now an established component of the local visual environment, and is therefore material to my own assessment.

7. Motorists travelling westbound on the M621 would experience the two digital displays in very close succession. Although the existing static hoarding is already viewed sequentially with the portrait-format screen, the introduction of a second digital display would create a different and more intense effect. The two screens would operate independently, each with its own unsynchronised cycle of changing images. Their contrasting portrait and landscape formats would further emphasise the absence of visual coherence. The resulting arrangement would appear visually discordant, contributing to cumulative advertising clutter in this location.
8. Conditions could control luminance, image duration and the use of static images on the proposed screen. However, such measures would not address the cumulative effect of two digital displays operating independently within close proximity. I have no mechanism before me that could require the two screens to be synchronised. In any event, as they appear to be owned and managed separately, any such requirement would not be enforceable or capable of implementation. The cumulative visual harm arising from two unsynchronised displays would therefore remain.
9. The relationship with Fairfield House and its users was not raised as a concern in the previous appeal and I see no reason to reach a different view. The decisive consideration in this instance is the cumulative impact arising from the introduction of a second digital display into views experienced principally from the motorway.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the digital display would have a harmful effect on amenity.
11. Whilst not determinative, the proposal conflicts with Policies BD8 and GP5 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP), and Policy P10 of the Leeds Local Plan Core Strategy (2014; Selective Review 2019) (CS), insofar as they seek the sensitive siting of advertisements and protection of amenity. For the same reasons, there would be conflict with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which advises that poorly sited and designed advertisements can adversely affect the quality and character of places.

Public safety

12. The Planning Practice Guidance emphasises that all advertisements are intended to attract attention but advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety.
13. The proposed digital display would be visible to drivers travelling on the M621 at 50mph on the approach to the Junction 3 off-slip. This is a complex section of highway, with gantries, high traffic volumes and significant HGV movements, where drivers must make early and informed lane choice decisions.
14. The nearby portrait-format digital screen has altered the visual environment since the 2020 appeal decision. It is therefore appropriate for the proposal to be assessed in the context of two digital screens operating independently and in close proximity.
15. The Council's highways evidence highlights a recorded increase in collisions on this section of the approach since September 2020, with contributory factors

including failure to look properly. While it cannot be stated that the existing digital screen caused these collisions, the pattern is relevant when considering whether a further digital display screen could increase the risk of driver distraction.

16. The appellant's Road Safety Risk Assessment applies typical safeguards for digital advertising, such as luminance limits and static image requirements, and acknowledges the presence of the nearby portrait digital display.
17. However, the Assessment does not reflect the most recent collision data identified by the Council. It also does not address the operational interaction between the two digital displays in any substantive manner. Given the unsynchronised nature of the two screens, such possibilities are material to the assessment of distraction risk.
18. Conditions controlling the operation of the proposed display would not mitigate the combined visual load arising from two separate, unsynchronised digital screens of different format. Again, there is no mechanism before me through which synchronisation of the two screens could be reasonably secured. The potential for cumulative distraction would therefore remain.
19. Thus, on the evidence before me, it has not been demonstrated that the digital display would avoid adverse effects on public safety, with particular regard to highway safety.
20. Whilst not determinative, the proposal conflicts with Policy GP5 of the UDP and Policy T2 of the CS, insofar as they relate to highway safety.

Conclusion

21. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to amenity and public safety. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR