



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2026

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/W2465/Z/25/3376562

Unit R3 Highcross, 11 Bath House Lane, Leicester LE1 4SA

- 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 Maxx Media Ltd against the decision of Leicester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 20251520.
 - The advertisement proposed is erection of a single-sided digital screen.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and express consent is granted for the erection of a single-sided digital screen as applied for. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations and the following additional conditions:
 - 1) The proposed advertisement shall display static images only and not animated, scrolling, intermittent or flashing images, or directions to drivers at any time. The rate of change between successive images shall be no greater than 1 second with no swiping or other animated transition methods between successive images. The minimum display time each successive advertising image shall be no less than 10 seconds per image.
 - 2) The functionality of the advertisement shall have a default mechanism to switch it off in the event of a malfunction or during periods of maintenance.
 - 3) The maximum luminance signs displayed on the advertisement shall not exceed 300cd/m² during hours of darkness and shall not exceed 5000cd/m² during daytime hours.

Main Issue

2. Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The assessment regarding public safety is not disputed and the main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to an upper floor level façade on the Highcross Shopping Centre within St Peter's Square. St Peter's Square is a vibrant commercial, pedestrianised environment within Leicester City Centre. The existing building is commercial and there are many commercial uses nearby including restaurants, shops, bars etc. The area therefore has a commercial character and there are

many other advertisements, street furniture and signage in the vicinity of the site including existing commercial signage to nearby establishments many of which are of an illuminated nature.

4. In addition to the above, there is also a public art display in the centre of the Square to the west of the appeal site which is essentially made up of a series of slim, tall, 3d, freestanding digital screens. Whilst they do not advertise in the same way as the proposed display, they do reflect upcoming cultural events or seasons etc as well as other digital displays. At my site visit, I was able to see the columns colourful display of animated digital content. Whilst of a different nature to the appeal before me, its presence together with other adverts in the area means that advertisement/digital screens are a familiar feature of the area and make up the established character of the Square. Whilst there are a mixture of advertisements, public art and street furniture in the vicinity, I did not find the area to feel overly cluttered and there was a good level of space/openness available within the Square representing visual breaks.
5. The proposed development seeks consent for the installation of 1 media screen to the Highcross Shopping Centre elevation facing onto St Peter's Square. The advert would measure 4.3 metres in height and 8.3 metres in width with a depth of 0.1 metres. It would be situated over 6 metres above ground level.
6. There is an existing logo sign on the existing façade at the appeal site comprising 'St Peter's Square'. This is shown to be relocated from the bottom right-hand side to the top right-hand side to make way for the proposed advertisement.
7. Whilst the advert would cover a large area, the façade is large enough to accommodate such an addition without it appearing stark or dominant. A level of space would remain around the advert which would help to break up its visual mass on the building.
8. The proposed advertisement would be illuminated. However, its size and positioning on the wall at high level would not be overly dominant in a street scene where a variety of displays are commonplace. It would not therefore unduly stand out from the existing street scene nor impact the visual amenity of the area. Furthermore, the maximum brightness will always be within the guidelines as set by the institute of Lighting Professionals Technical Note 5. Appropriate conditions could control brightness, animation and the timing of image changes. The advertisement would not therefore be deemed significantly bright or flashing as to result in a detrimental harm to visual amenity particularly when taking into account the existing character of the area which is clearly an established location for advertisements, public art and signs. The area is also one which is well lit by commercial premises, Integrated lighting systems and the public art to the west. The level of illumination would not therefore represent a dominant feature and would readily absorb into the street scene.
9. I have had regard to the presence of nearby restaurants and seating areas within the Square, but I do not find the proposed advertisement in this location to detrimentally alter the experience of this area or harmfully impact on the amenable use of the public realm. This is because the proposed advert would sit comfortably in this context, at high level and would not result in the area becoming unacceptably cluttered nor would it overwhelm the elevation and enclosed square.

10. There would likely be some reflection off the cinema's mirrored façade opposite the appeal site given the positioning of this building and its materials. However, any reflection would not be of the extent to be harmful, nor would it detrimentally increase the prominence of the advertisement even taking into account when background light levels are lower. A level of reflection would be typical for such a modern contemporary Square with reflective architectural finishes and there are already light sources in the Square which are already likely to cause some reflection. I appreciate that a range of people use the Square and some may be more sensitive to light than others, but this area is one where lighting and signage is already apparent and such displays are appropriate and aligned with functional and aesthetic expectations of a contemporary retail space which is visually active. I do not find the proposed advertisement to be so detrimental in this regard.
11. The proposals are located in the vicinity of apartments within and around the Square although any apartments on upper floors are located at oblique angles to the proposed screen and are therefore not considered to be directly affected. Furthermore, conditions to control the brightness means that the screen would have little impact in terms of light spill and thus would not have a detrimental effect on residential amenity.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not unacceptably harm amenity. I have taken into account Policy CS03 of the Core Strategy, 2014 which amongst other matters, requires development to respond positively to the surroundings and be appropriate to the local setting and context. Given I have concluded that the proposal would not harm amenity, the proposal would not conflict with this policy or paragraphs 135, 139 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to achieving well-designed places.

Conditions

13. The five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations are imposed in the terms of my decision. In addition to these, I have considered the Council's suggested planning conditions in their Questionnaire. I find it necessary to impose a condition controlling the brightness, animation and the timing of image changes as well as requiring the display to freeze in the event of any malfunction. These are imposed in the interests of public safety and amenity.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR