



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2026

by **P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 June 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/U5930/Z/26/3378263

Land adjacent to Napier Arms Bus Stand, Woodford New Road, Woodford Green, E18 2QA

- 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 the London Borough of Waltham Forest Council.
 - The application reference is 253041.
 - The advertisement proposed is a D48 digital display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on amenity and public safety.

Reasons

3. The proposal would result in the installation of an internally illuminated digital advertising display measuring three metres in height and six metres in width, positioned two metres above ground level. It would be situated to the rear of a crescent shaped area of hardstanding on this corner plot which is bounded by a low curved wall.
4. The Regulations, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety.

Amenity

5. Whilst the site forms part of the area of built development, it is set against the backdrop of the woodland associated with Epping Forest immediately beyond. The other corners of the junction accommodate a petrol station to the southwest; a restaurant diagonally opposite to the south with a second petrol station adjacent; and a commercial property on the third corner adjacent to a construction site. The site itself has been used for car vehicle display although it was unused during my visit. It has consent for use as an electric vehicle charging station although details of this have not been provided.

6. The nearby commercial developments, particularly the two petrol stations, have a range of signage associated with them. However, aside from this small concentration of commercial properties, the wider area includes residential development and areas of Epping Forest. The houses to the west side of Woodford New Road are set within the context of the trees associated with the Epping Forest. Woodford New Road also has strong landscaping particularly to the southeast, although this is less evident to the northeast and southwest sides of the road.
7. The position of the advertisement, against the backdrop of the woodland, would assist in limiting the range of views of this feature with it being screened when approaching from the north. However, the introduction of a large digital display, in the position proposed, would be extremely prominent when travelling north.
8. Although experienced after the two petrol stations to either side of the main road, it would nevertheless be perceived as being entirely at odds with the character of the woodland and housing area beyond. Whilst the prominent advertisements associated with the petrol stations do introduce a commercial character to the immediate area; and the proposed vehicle charging provisions are likely to add to this, the scale and prominence of the proposed advertisement would significantly increase the extent of advertising in this immediate area. The proposed advert would also be considerably more prominent than those existing at present given its size, height, orientation and setting against the woodland backdrop. It would be overly dominant, and it would undoubtedly detract from the character and appearance of the area. It would result in considerable harm to visual amenity.

Public safety

9. Woodford New Road is a relatively busy road and in the vicinity of the site, it has junctions with Oak Hill to the west and Fullers Road to the east. Activity in the highway is complicated by the presence of the two petrol stations. There is a controlled crossing, with a small central island, just before the junctions. An off-carriageway cycle lane runs along the west side of the road with an on-road marked cycle lane to the east side. The position of the advertisement would ensure that it would not be visible to motorists travelling south.
10. The lights to the crossing are located on both sides of the approaching carriageway. An advertisement in the distance, beyond them, is unlikely to distract drivers to the point where they would not be fully aware of and have regard to the traffic lights or any associated queuing traffic. I am not satisfied that the proposed advertisement would materially alter the safety of the controlled pedestrian crossing.
11. There are a number of points where drivers would be seeking to enter or cross the main carriageways. The advertisement would not generally be in a direct line of sight for drivers when seeking to carry out such manoeuvres and given the amount of other traffic, including cyclists and pedestrians, drivers would be taking particular care at these times. I am not satisfied that they would be unduly distracted by the advertisements when making such manoeuvres.
12. The advertisement would be clearly in the line of sight of drivers heading north along the main road. At this point, drivers are faced with various road users turning and breaking within the vicinity of the junctions and petrol stations. However, for those drivers, this is not a complicated area of highway with most traffic travelling

straight on along the main carriageway. With the suggested conditions in place to control image changes, content and brightness, I am not persuaded that the advertisement would be such a distraction that it would materially increase harm with regard to public safety.

Other matters

13. The appellant has set out the wider benefits associated with digital roadside advertising. I have had full regard to these and consider that they provide significant weight in favour of the proposal.
14. A number of development plan policies put forward with regard to highway safety are not directly relevant to this proposal but in any event, as safety would not be compromised, there would be no conflict with these policies in any event. With regard to amenity, it would conflict with policies 53E and 59B of the Waltham Forest Local Plan LP1 (2024) as it would not complement, reinforce and/or enhance visual amenity, local character or distinctiveness. I have had regard to this conflict but given that decisions can be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, these policies cannot be decisive.
15. Reference has been made to the wider area being part of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation; a Site of Special Scientific Interest; a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation; and being part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. Reference has also been made to the adjacent trees and concerns with regard to lighting levels with regard to nocturnal animals. There would be no encroachment beyond the existing wall and the already surfaced area. Trees to the rear would not be harmed although views of them would be obscured. Lighting level conditions are already proposed and if necessary, the advertisement could be turned off overnight. However, as decisions should only be made in the interests of amenity and public safety, these issues cannot be decisive.
16. Reference has been made to a range of other decisions. Whilst it is the case that advertisements are common features within a variety of areas, it is necessary to assess this proposal on its own particular merits. The examples put forward do not persuade me that this proposal would be acceptable with regard to the amenity of this specific area.

Conclusions

17. The advertisement would not result in unacceptable concerns with regard to public safety, but it would detract from the character and appearance of the area and it would be harmful to visual amenity. Whilst I have had regard to the benefits listed, these would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm to amenity that would result. Neither the conditions suggested, nor any additional conditions, would overcome this concern. I therefore conclude that the appeal must be dismissed in the interests of amenity.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR