



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2025

by **R Dickson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/Z/25/3373894

Land adjacent to Esso Service Station and Tesco Express, junction of The Grove and Barrack Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2EX

- 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 Martin Stephens of JC Decaux UK Ltd against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref is P/25/02618/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as “freestanding advertising structure featuring one internally illuminated sequential display screen facing west to replace four existing poster panels.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development above is taken from the application form. However, there appears to be a discrepancy between the description of development and the development proposed. The parcel of grassed land has 5 advertisements sited around its boundary. The drawing on page 3 of Part 1 of the Roadside Advertising Proposal (September 2024) submitted by the appellant shows that none of the existing advertisements are within the red-line boundary, and therefore the appeal site. As such, the proposed digital display would not replace any of the existing advertisements. All of the advertisements appear to be sited within the blue-line boundary, indicating that although they are within the appellants ownership, they do not form part of the appeal site. No mechanism has been put to me which would allow me to require their removal if I were to allow this appeal. Accordingly, as I would be unable to control the removal of the advertisements outside of the appeal site, this matter has not been determinative in my decision. I have considered the appeal on the evidence before me.
3. Planning permission for a ‘drive-thru’ restaurant has been granted on part of the land within the appellants ownership. While the implementation of the scheme is a fallback position, I have only been provided with evidence of the scheme at outline permission stage, with no detailed evidence provided of the finalised scheme as granted through the reserved matters application. I explain the implications of the drive-thru permission in Other Matters.
4. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) reiterate this approach. Therefore, while I have taken account of the policies and

guidelines that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (a) public safety, and (b) visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

Public safety

6. The PPG states that all advertisements are intended to attract attention and establishes that advertisements in locations where drivers need to take more care, including places where local conditions present traffic hazards, are more likely to affect public safety. The PPG also lists the main types of advertisements which may cause danger to road users. Included are those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or externally or internally illuminated signs, which because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, and advertisements that are subject to frequent changes of the display.
7. The appeal site comprises a strip of land adjacent to a service station and associated convenience store. The site is visible from the roundabout where The Grove meets Barrack Road. The proposed digital display would be seen in the same context as the existing 5 static advertisements.
8. The appeal site is most readily visible when approaching the roundabout along Barrack Road, which is not controlled by traffic lights. Here, the traffic travelling towards the roundabout is in a single lane, with a separate cycle lane. Closer to the roundabout, the carriageway splits into two vehicle lanes, with the cycle lane no longer clearly marked until it reappears at the give way markings leading onto the roundabout. A bus stop is situated on the approach to the roundabout. A pedestrian crossing, which is not signal controlled, is also near to the roundabout. As such, any pedestrians wanting to cross the road would likely need to make eye contact with approaching drivers in order to cross safely. Consequently, the approach to the roundabout along Barrack Road is potentially complicated, requiring the full concentration of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. Collisions have been recorded around these junctions.
9. To ensure the safe movement of traffic, the attention of road users must remain on both the traffic on the roundabout as well as traffic approaching the roundabout at other junctions. Given the gentle curve of the road, the advertisement would be visible from a considerable distance on Barrack Road. As such, road users may observe a number of different advertisements on their approach to the Roundabout. This would be harmful to public safety, through distracting the attention of road users away from hazards on the road, slowing their response time. I acknowledge that the advertisement may not be perceived in detail at that distance, and that the duration of the display of each advertisement would be controlled by a suitably worded condition. However, depending on the flow and speed of traffic entering the roundabout, even a longer display time has potential to give rise to harm to public safety.

10. Consequently, the digital advertisement display would be a harmful addition to the appeal site, that would have a harmful effect on public safety. In accordance with the Regulations, although not determinative, the proposed advertisement would conflict with the aims of Policy KS11 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy (2014) (Local Plan). Although Policy KS11 deals with development rather than explicitly with advertisements, its overarching aims seek to ensure that proposals do not result in negative transport impacts.

Visual amenity

11. Although there are commercial units near to the appeal site, there are several residential dwellings adjacent to The Grove. The area is therefore characterised by a mix of uses. The 5 advertisements on the grassed area also help to define the character of the area. During my site visit, I observed all of the static advertisements in the area, some of which were torn with previously displayed posters showing through. Collectively, they contribute to a cluttered appearance, dominating the roundabout with advertisements.
12. The evidence before me suggests that the digital display would be positioned slightly behind the existing 96-sheet advertisement panel, at a different angle. As I am unable to control the removal of the existing static advertisements outside of the appeal site, the digital display would be viewed next to them. I acknowledge that there is historic evidence of the site being used for advertisements. However, the cumulative impact of the proposal adjacent to the existing static advertisements would appear to be an over provision of advertisements, which would intensify the cluttered appearance.
13. The advertisement size on the proposed digital display would be a standard 48-sheet size, which would be the same as the 4 smaller advertisements near to the site. I have not been provided with a direct comparison of the existing and proposed advertisements. However, from the evidence before me, the advertisement and structure would appear to be considerably taller than the existing advertisements. Despite being viewed against the backdrop of the petrol filling station, the proposal would be taller than the canopy of the filling station. As such, its scale would be at odds with the surrounding area within which it is viewed.
14. The proposal would introduce an element of internal illumination that does not currently exist. The appellant has suggested that the neighbouring petrol filling station operates between 6am and midnight which is well lit overhead. I acknowledge that the level of luminance could be controlled in poor weather or at night through a suitably worded condition. However, the scale of the digital display compared with the petrol filling station would mean any illumination, during the day or night, would be a harmful, uncharacteristic addition to the area.
15. Overall, the cumulative impacts of the proposal and the existing advertisements, together with the introduction of an internally illuminated tall structure, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such, I conclude that the advertisement would have a harmful effect on visual amenity. I have taken into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are relevant, in accordance with the Regulations. Policy HE2 of the Local Plan deals with development within area rather than advertisements, while Policy HE3 of the Local Plan deals with proposals more generally. Together, their overarching aims seek

to ensure that proposals are compatible with or improve their surroundings in terms of visual impact. These policies are therefore relevant in this case. The advertisement would also conflict with paragraph 141 of the Framework which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. I have concluded that the advertisements harm amenity, and thus do not accord with these policies.

Other Matters

16. The fallback position is the implementation of the drive-thru permission, and the existing clutter of advertisements would be removed in conjunction with that permission. However, only very limited details have been presented regarding that permission, such that were it to come forwards I have little clarity as to the combined visual impact of the two schemes, or its effect on public safety. Although the proposed advertisement may be less visually prominent against the fallback than against the current site condition, it appears to be sited on land identified for the drive-thru landscaping. This may therefore in itself cause harm to the appearance of that proposal. There would also be additional visual distraction for drivers. On this basis and on the evidence before me, I find no additional support arises from the potential implementation of the fallback, so as to outweigh my findings above.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons give above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Dickson

INSPECTOR