

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 20/12/19

App No: 191647/ADV
Address: Junction of Brunswick Hill and Oxford Road/192 Oxford Road, Reading
Ward: Battle
Case Officer: James Schofield
Proposal: Upgrade of 1no. 48-sheet advertisement hoarding to digital LED display.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The development site relates to a 48-sheet advertisement hoarding located on a railway embankment facing Oxford Road. Adjacent is West Reading Station, elevated railway lines, large commercial units and terrace houses (faces front).

2. PROPOSAL

Advertisement consent is sought for an illuminated digital LED display to replacement an existing 48-sheet advertisement hoarding.

Plans considered;

Drawing No. REA-001/001 Location & Site Plans

Drawing No. REA-001/002 Existing & Proposed Elevations

Drawing No. REA-001/003 Existing & Proposed Specifications

Drawing No. REA-001/004 Existing & Proposed Views

Received 11 October 2019

3. CONSULTEES

INTERNAL

Transport

The Transport Officer made the following comments:

The proposal is for a 48- Sheet LED media display screen on the Oxford Road adjacent to Reading west Railway Station. Presently there is an existing externally illuminated 48-sheet advertising hoarding at the site. Historically, the site has operated as a tri-vision unit which would show pre-set images on rotation.

The proposal seeks to replace the existing advertisement unit with a digital display screen showing an illuminated static image with the proposed LED media display is of a similar dimension to the existing advertising hoarding. It is not proposed to show any animations or moving images of any kind but it has not been indicated whether the advertisement will include a single image or a series of images, this should therefore be confirmed.

The A327 Oxford Road is a classified road subject to a 30mph speed limit and the proposed display would be visible to road users travelling in a easterly direction. As the proposed sign is located on an existing advertisement site which has historically displayed tri-vision advertisements, it is considered that the proposed advertisement would not unduly distract highways users and give rise to safety issues over and above the existing advertisement display.

However, the luminance levels and display settings must be controlled through appropriate conditions. The applicant has suggested a luminance level of 300 candelas per square metre (cd/m2) between dusk and dawn which is deemed acceptable with a maximum daytime luminance of 5000 candelas per square metre (cd/m2), this does appear to be high and as such an actual maximum luminance should be included within the application.

Prior to determining the applicant please ask the applicants agent to submit additional information to address the above points.

Consultations with the applicant indicated that indeed 5000 candelas per square metre (cd/m2) during the daytime are sought by this application as is the use of static images.

Ecology

The RBC Ecology officer had no objections to the proposal.

CCTV

TVPS asked for comment on potential impact on CCTV network; none was received.

EXTERNAL

A site notice was displayed at the site on the 12th November 2019 receiving no comment.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

7. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the *Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)*.

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2019 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF'

and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant.

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

Relevant Policies

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 Design and Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
OU4 Advertisements
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

8. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

8.1 Amenity

It is acknowledged that the site is, for west Reading, an unusually busy thoroughfare with significant degrees of commercial and street lighting in place; the site being adjacent to large commercial units, West Reading Station and is located at roughly the mid-point of the Oxford Road commercial area. Consequently the area has a significant amount of cumulative light pollution. The proposed LED advertisement hoarding is of a similar size and design to that already existing and in place, and is located against the railway embankment and bridge. The signage performs an informative function for passers-by about various paid advertisements. The proposal is principally about the change from static paper advertising to a large LED display and the possible impact on residential amenity.

The site is considered correctly described as Zone E3, as cited by guidance note 4.7.29, of the *Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements* (Institute of Light Professionals, 2015). This would suggest a maximum night time level of illumination of 300 candelas/m². The guide also suggests that curfews can be placed in order to safeguard amenity during times of increased sensitivity; such as ordinary sleeping hours (ex. 23:00hrs to dawn). The local plan indicates that daytime luminance should seek to control daytime levels of illumination in the interest of public safety and amenity, however, no specific limits are suggested for daylight hours. The same guide cited by the above referenced guidance note of

the local plan indicates “a level of 5000 candelas/m² should never be exceeded.” This wording clearly indicates an upper limit rather than best practice, however, no other figure is offered for cases such as these. Other recent cases in less sensitive areas have approved daytime limits of 600 candelas/m²; this example is deemed informative for daytime levels of illumination only for this case, but are considered to be an appropriate balance between the desires of the applicant and the need to avoid detrimental impacts occurring on the amenity of the wider area. It is acknowledged that rapid changing of still images or animations can cause a flashing or flickering effect which could create a materially detrimental impact on the amenity of local residents. A condition limiting advertisements to still images and the rate of change, as recommended by the *Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements* (Institute of Light Professionals, 2015) could address these concerns.

The proposed level of illumination at 5000 candelas/m² during the day and 300 candelas/m² overnight are deemed unacceptably bright for a location which includes residential uses and significant cumulative amount of light pollution from extant advertisements. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF indicates that control should be sought in the interest of safeguarding amenity and public safety from the cumulative effects of advertisements. Accordingly, conditions limiting illumination to 600 candelas/m² from dawn to dusk (day time), 300 candelas/m² from dusk to dawn (hours of darkness) and between 2300hrs and 0600hrs (ordinary sleeping hours) to 150 candelas/m² are deemed appropriate to properly address concerns relating to cumulative advertisement impact upon amenity becoming detrimental. Additionally, conditions prohibiting rapid changing of advertisements or the use of either visual or special effects would appropriately prevent detrimental harm to nearby resident’s amenity. With these conditions in place, the proposal would accord with local planning policies CC7, CC8 and OU4 for the purposes of avoiding detrimental impact on amenity for both residents and the wider area.

8.2 Public Safety

The proposed signage is located in a position that would not cause a physical obstruction to members of the public using the highway - as it is placed upon a railway embankment. Public safety concerns are principally limited to the potential for the proposed backlit LED illumination to pose a distraction through excessive glare or attention diverting images or animations to users of the transport network.

It is noted that a pedestrian crossing is located under the railway bridge and eastbound traffic could become distracted by an LED advertisement hoarding sited on the railway embankment and thus could pose a risk to those using the crossing. Drawing upon the earlier discussion on controlling levels of illumination, animations, transitions, special effects and visual effects in the amenity section; it is considered that conditions limiting advertisements to still images, minimum display time to 10 seconds and limiting illumination to 600 candelas/m² from dawn to dusk (day time), 300 candelas/m² from dusk to dawn (hours of darkness), except between 2300hrs and 0600hrs (ordinary sleeping hours) which should be limited to 150 candelas/m², would also allow for the proposal to accord with local planning policies CC7, OU4 and TR3 for

the purposes of avoiding any cumulative impacts of advertisements causing a detrimental impact on public safety.

9. CONCLUSION

In light of the above assessment the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of the development plan and is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

10. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

11. CONDITIONS

1. A1 Standard advert
2. TL1 Time
3. AD2 Approved Plans
4. AD1 Advert luminance controls
5. C00 Display Time
6. C00 Visual Effects
7. C00 Special Effects

APPENDIX

Site photo from 12th of November 2019.



