



PLANNING and HERITAGE STATEMENT

Installation of 1No. billboard

**24 Regent Court
Caversham Road
Coley
Reading
RG1 7HW**

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1.1	Application site in context

1 INTRODUCTION

Context

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Dewar Planning Associates Ltd on behalf of Elite Billboards (the “Applicant”) to accompany a planning application for the erection of a 6 meter by 3 metre advertising board (the “Proposed Development”) at 24 Regent Court, Caversham Road, Coley (the “Application Site”).



Figure 1.1 Application site in context

- 1.2 The billboard and associated equipment are sourced from British company ‘LED Synergy Electronic Displays’ who have over 35 years experience and numerous certifications in the manufacture and supply of electronic displays to many companies and individuals worldwide. They have installed in the region of nearly 20,000 LED screens and displays to a broad spectrum of clients.
- 1.3 Dewar Planning have partnered up to act exclusively as planning consultant for the Applicant, Elite Billboards, who are also based in Yorkshire. Elite Billboards specialise in procuring out-of-home (OOH) billboard sites, with a focus on building a digital portfolio across the UK. We take great pride in working with local businesses and Elite Billboards are no different and we hope this relationship continues for many more years to come providing customers with a more local alternative than some of the multi-national companies that currently exist in the market.

1.4 Dewar Planning have been involved in a number of similar planning applications with recent approvals as follows which may act as a good comparison to the application site:

- Bradford MDC - Replacement of existing advertisement billboard with same size digital display using a backlit LED screen. 1 Midland Terrace Canal Road Bradford West Yorkshire BD2 1AP
- Wakefield Council - Installation of internally illuminated LED displayboard - 268 Wakefield Road Ossett Wakefield WF5 9AB
- Brent Council - Installation of an internally illuminated double faced free-standing digital advertising hoarding to north east frontage of Oxgate Centre London, NW2 7JA

The proposed development

1.5 This application is submitted for an advertisement billboard 6 meters wide and 3 meters tall, wall mounted with the base of the billboard 3.5 metres above ground level.

1.6 The billboard will be used to show the advertisements from a backlit LED screen. The position and size of the advertisements will not change, only the means by which the messages are shown. As the proposal seeks to install digital adverts that mimic the appearance of the existing paper adverts, there is minimal impact upon the visual amenity.

1.7 This form of technology provides quality images to be applied to roadside advertising and provides a more sustainable advertising option with better opportunities for local businesses to advertise, with lower costs than traditional paper adverts which require printing and installation.

1.8 There will be a protective black casing around the outside of the LED screen to provide accessibility and security.

1.9 The advertising images can be changed remotely by means of a secure feed. The transition from one image to another will be instantaneous. No moving images will be shown on the screens, all advertising will be static imagery.

2 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Advertisement regulations

- 2.1 This application is submitted under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 for consent to display an advertisement at the application site. The planning definition 'advertisement' is defined in section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) as: *'any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of advertisements, announcement or direction, and (without prejudice to the previous provisions of this definition) includes any hoarding or similar structure used or designed, or adopted for use and anything else principally used, or designed or adopted principally, for the display of advertisements'*
- 2.2 Regulation 3 requires that local planning authorities control the display of advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.
- 2.3 Factors relevant to amenity include;
- the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;
- 2.4 Factors relevant to public safety include;
- the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;
 - Whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

The Local Plan

- 2.5 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that planning law (namely Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 2.6 The Reading Borough Council Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019, it guides development in Reading up to the year 2036. The relevant Local Plan policies in relation to the proposed development include:
- Policy CC7 – Design and Public Realm
 - Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
 - Policy EN1 : Protection and Enhancement of The History Environment
 - Policy OU4 – Advertisements
 - Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

National planning policy and guidance

- 2.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is to be taken into account in all planning decisions. The framework provides a set of development management policies for advertising proposals.
- 2.8 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. It goes on to state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.
- 2.9 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) relating to advertising displays was published in March 2014 and sets guidance on advertising proposals and the approvals process in England.
- 2.10 Factors relevant to considering amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic architectural,

cultural or similar interest (regulation 3 (2) a)) in the immediate neighbourhood are to be assessed in any proposal.

- 2.11 Within the PPG it is highlighted that advertisements would be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city (where there are large buildings and main highways) where the advertisement would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site
- 2.12 The guidance identifies several types of roadside advertisements that may impact on public safety, which include changing displays, moving displays, flashing lights and advertisements that resemble traffic signs.

Heritage Legislation

- 2.13 The duty of the Council as a Local Planning Authority is set out in paragraphs 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The duty in relation to Listed Buildings is to preserve its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which the building may possess.
- 2.14 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

3 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Advertisement regulations

- 3.1 The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 identify two areas of consideration in applications for consent, being the likely impact of the advertisement display on the interests of public safety and visual amenity. This section of planning considerations is based around these two elements.

Highway safety

- 3.2 The application site is located on private land facing northbound traffic on Caversham Road. The position of the billboard would maintain visibility of highways and existing signage. The advertisement will be viewed within the visual context the commercial uses and buildings found within this area.
- 3.3 The position of the advertisement parallel to the road sidings does not create a conflict with traffic heads nor present an obstruction to road signage. Drivers will continue to see the displayed messages without causing distraction or impact on highway safety. The location and the proposed design of the advertisement display itself would not be against the interests of visual amenity or public safety.
- 3.4 Furthermore, the screen is fitted with a light detector to reduce glare, light pollution and for general energy efficiency. As it gets darker the screen brightness reduces and continues to do so as low as 1%.
- 3.5 The applicant can ensure the development will meet the Highways Authority standards with the following settings:
- Maximum illumination between sunset and sunrise to not exceed 300 cd/m²;
 - Maximum illumination between sunrise and sunset to be automatically controlled via light sensors monitoring ambient light condition but not to exceed 600 cd/m²;

- The advertisement display will only show static images of advertisements for the lifetime of the development with no moving, flashing or image effects at any time;
 - No adverts will be displayed which could be interpreted as road traffic signs; and
 - A default blank screen in the circumstance of power loss/malfunction.
- 3.6 The Applicant is willing to agree to a condition of the parameters as set out above.
- 3.7 The proposed development would not be an incongruous addition to the area, with the appearance of the digital screen mimicking that of a traditional paper billboard, with illumination control measures as stated above, the development can be located at the application site without any impacts to highways safety. The application is considered a suitable location for a digital billboard in terms of highway safety.
- 3.8 The development is therefore considered to meet the intentions of the Local Plan at Policies CC8, TR3 and OU4 and the NPPF.

Character and Appearance of the Area and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 3.9 The Application site to its eastern elevation is noted as being Grade II listed (listing number 1113434). The listing is noted for its external finishes including details of the architraves and cornices. No elements of the south facing elevation are noted in the listing and no features as noted in the listing are affected by the proposed wall mounting of a billboard to the north west facing gable end and therefore there is not considered to be any harm caused to the site and its status as a listed building.
- 3.10 Proposed materials are standard in construction, there will be a protective black casing around the outside of the LED screen to provide accessibility and security.
- 3.11 All frames are delivered ready to be bolted together so no welding on site required. A cradle is provided which is to be concreted into the ground to build the frame from.

- 3.12 The application site does not fall within a conservation area nor is it an area of special control. The building's east elevation is noted as Grade II listed, however the gable end to which the proposed development is located has no features and the two elevations of the building would not be viewed at the same time. This along with the multiple existing street lighting and commercial nature of the immediate area allows for the development to have no harm on the listing.
- 3.13 As the proposal seeks to install a digital advert that mimics the appearance of the paper adverts, there is minimal impact upon the visual amenity during the daytime. The night time illumination is automatically controlled to ensure the level of luminance does not cause material harm to any amenity.
- 3.14 The setting of the surrounding area with multiple street lighting and commercial buildings is well suited for a digital billboard. The site's immediate surroundings consist predominantly of commercial buildings.
- 3.15 The proposal is considered to cause "less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset" as set out in Paragraph 212 of the NPPF. The harm should therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the minimal harm of the works to mount a billboard to the gable end does not outweigh the public benefits of the improved advertisements for local business who would otherwise not be able to afford traditional paper billboard advertisements. Digital billboards allow the opportunity to display multiple different advertisements at a smaller cost than paper billboard posting, therefore enabling smaller more local business use, rather than the traditional nationwide household brands. Environmentally the proposal to install a digital billboard which is remotely managed has a smaller overall carbon footprint, without regular vehicle trips to repost paper boards. As such therefore the proposed development is considered to meet the intentions of both the Local Plan as well as the NPPF.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 identify two areas of consideration in applications for consent, being the likely impact of the advertisement display on the interests of public safety and visual amenity.
- 4.2 The proposed development does not create a conflict with traffic heads nor present an obstruction to road signage or highways safety. The location and the proposed design of the advertisement display itself would not be against the interests of visual amenity or public safety.
- 4.3 The proposal is considered to cause "less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset" as set out in Paragraph 212 of the NPPF. The harm should therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, the minimal harm of the works to mount a billboard to the gable end does not outweigh the public benefits of the improved advertisements for local business who would otherwise not be able to afford traditional paper billboard advertisements.
- 4.4 Overall, therefore the proposal is considered to be consistent with the advertisement regulations, national planning policy and guidance, the Local Plan the NPPF and is therefore considered acceptable against all planning policy considerations.

