

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0221 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: 211 Shinfield Road Reading RG2 8HA

Proposal: Erection of a D6 Small Format Advertisement Display

Applicant: Wildstone Estates Limited

Received date: 11/02/2025

Target Decision date: 09/04/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) located at 211 Shinfield Road, Reading. The site falls within the Designated Shinfield Road District Centre and forms part of the Key Frontages along the Shinfield Road. The PFS has been in place for many years. The PFS can offer fuelling for up to 10 vehicles at any one time, along with a shop and other facilities within the forecourt such as a carwash, facilities for vacuuming, air and water and additional parking spaces with lots of varying car movements. The property currently has a large forecourt totem pole with illuminated panels and LED lighting throughout the forecourt area. The area surrounding the application site is predominantly commercial and retail with some residential. The site is adjacent to a busy A road which is subject to street calming measures, a 20mph speed limit, two traffic signalled junctions, a bus stop, and adjacent shop parking in close proximity, a busy bus route and various junctions providing access and egress from the nearby businesses.

Site visit date: 25th February 2025



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The PFS currently has a number of free-standing advertisement boards on its premises, one of which is subject to this application. The proposal consists of the erection of a D6 Small Format Advertisement Display board. The proposed advertisement display will be located in the same location as the existing advertisement board located at the entrance to the PFS forecourt. The proposed advertisement display is to be positioned so it faces oncoming traffic either driving along Shinfield Road or entering the PFS forecourt.

The proposed D6 small format advertisement display will measure 2.45m high, by 1.23m wide and 0.34m deep. From documents submitted it is unclear how the advertisement display will be constructed (presumably metal) though it states the advertisement display itself will utilise modern LCD digital technology.

The D6 small format advertisement display will be monitored and controlled remotely in real time from a Network Operation Centre (NOC) to display advertisements and facilitate responsive maintenance where necessary. Diagnostics software can report any small technical faults (e.g. a broken panel) so that a kill switch can turn the content to black. Engineers are able to respond within 24 hours to any issues which require attendance.

Plans & Documents considered:

Application Form, dated 7th Feb 25

Covering Letter (Carter Jonas) dated 7th Feb 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/01 Site Location Plan, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/02 Existing Site Plan, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/03 Proposed Site Plan, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/04 Proposed Site Plan, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/05 Existing and Proposed Elevations, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/06 Specification, dated Jan 25

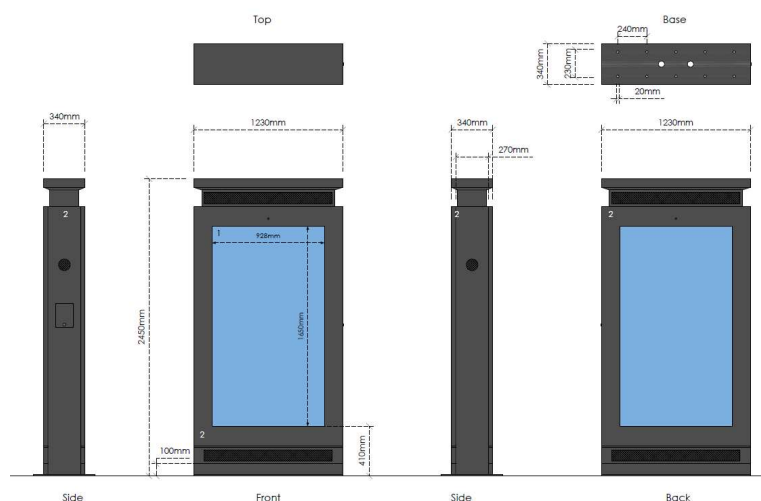
Drawing no: 23717/PA/07 Existing and Proposed CGI's, dated Jan 25

Drawing no: 23717/PA/08 Existing and Proposed CGI's, dated Jan 25

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 11th February 2025



Proposed Site Plans



Specification



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/22/0335 - Installation of x no. chargers and associated infrastructure – Withdrawn 2022

PL/20/0214 & PL/21/1921 – Installation of two jet washers – Approved 2022

PL/17/1543 - Installation of additional shop entrance and alterations to westward side elevation and external seating area – Approved 2017

PL/16/0377 - External refurbishment to the forecourt shop – Approved 2016

PL/10/2046 - Replace and extend the forecourt canopy, the replacement of dispensing pumps and pump islands, installation of additional dispensing pump and island, repositioning of tanker fills and tank vents and replacement of drainage petrol interceptors – Approved 2011

PL/03/0736 - Sales building fascia signage and alterations to monolith – Approved 2003

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

A Planning Notice was attached to nearby street furniture on 25th February and left in place for a minimum of 21 days for the duration of the public consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received from members of the public.

Internal

- Transport Development Control

RBC Transport Development Control (Highway Authority) (comments received 27/03/25)

This application is for a small advertisement display within the curtilage of Esso Petrol Station fronting onto Shinfield Road. The proposal seeks to erect a double-sided freestanding D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation. The advertisement unit measures 2450mm x 1250mm in size (screen size 928mm x 1650mm). The proposed display will be capable of displaying 6 advertising campaigns at a time, sequencing every ten seconds. The advertisements will comprise local and national campaigns as well as goods and services sold on site.

The proposed advertisement displays will be positioned within the site boundary but fronting onto the A327 Shinfield Road which carries large volumes of traffic and is one of the main arterial roads into Reading from the south. A signalized junction and pedestrian crossing is located approximately 35m to the north of the site, where drivers need to take more care.

The applicant has referenced Crashmap data (crashmap.co.uk) indicating that there have been four accidents on the approach to the site in the past 5 years (all of which was classified as 'slight' saved for one as 'serious'). The applicant asserts that the scheme would not result in significant visual distraction to motorists using the surrounding road networks. However, the illuminated digital displays would face towards on-coming traffic travelling each way along A327 Shinfield Road. Given that all advertisements are intended to attract attention, particularly if they are facing on-coming traffic, it is the Highway Authority's view that the proposed sequencing images, would cause distraction for drivers with a consequential risk of rear end shunts. As such, there would be a conflict with Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted below).

The National Planning Policy Guidance stipulates the following:

Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline.

Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014

The main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are:

(b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature;

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road;

ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals;

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; or

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display;

It is the Highway Authority's view that any additional distraction in the form of illuminated sequencing displays are more likely to affect public safety and increase the risk of incidents within the vicinity of the application site. As such, the proposed advertisement, would be a conflict with Reading Borough Local Plan Policies and paragraphs of the NPPG (highlighted above).

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.

6. 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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

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

7. APPRAISAL

Visual Amenity

It is considered that the size and prominent location of the proposed D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation, sited at the entrance to the PFS at 211 Shinfield Road would appear as an unattractive and prominent feature which would have a visual dominance in the street scene, harmful to the visual amenity of the area. The proposal would exacerbate an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location.

The proposal is contrary to Policy OU4 (Advertisements) and Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Public Safety

The siting and illuminated D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation adjacent to a busy classified A road near to 2 no. signalised pedestrianised crossings, a bus stop, nearby shop parking, busy bus route, various junctions providing access and egress from the nearby businesses and the 20mph roadside environment would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This could result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians.

The proposal conflict with policy TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and Policies DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and DM22 (Advertisements) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015) and Paragraphs 067 and 068 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

8. CONCLUSION

Having considered the proposals, and taking all of the information from consultees, officers consider that the proposed siting of the D6 small format illuminated advertising display sited at the entrance to the PFS at 211 Shinfield Road adjacent to a busy A road, a bus stop, parking, a bus route, various junctions providing access and egress from the nearby businesses and the 20mph roadside environment would be harmful in terms of Highway safety. In addition, the proposals would result in harm to visual amenity.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal at this site would harm the interests of visual amenity and be harmful to public safety.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. The siting and sequential images displayed on the proposed advertisement display screens would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic. This would increase the risk of sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. This would result in harm to public safety and would be in conflict with Policies TR3 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraph: 067 Reference ID: 18b-067- 20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014 and Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014 of National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).
2. The proposed advertisement display screens sited at the entrance to the PFS at 211 Shinfield Road by virtue of its illumination, orientation, and positioning, would appear as an unattractive and obtrusive feature in the street scene and would contribute towards an undesirable proliferation of visual clutter at this location. The proposed advertisements would therefore result in harm to the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies OU4 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.