

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward:

App Ref: PL/25/1580 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: University of Reading Whiteknights Campus, Shinfield Road, Reading, RG6 6DJ

Proposal: Proposed installation of three digital signs

Applicant: University of Reading

Received date: 04/11/2025

Target Decision date: Originally 30/12/2025; EOT agreed until 09/01/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to the Whiteknights Campus at the University of Reading which is located off Shinfield Road. The campus contains several university building and greenspaces. The Whiteknights campus falls within the boundaries of Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Council.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The University is proposing on installing new digital signages around the Whiteknights Campus which are spread across two local authorities Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The Applicant proposes three digital signages within the borough of Reading.

Each signage is of the dimension 1836mm x 890mm x 200mm. The signages will have illuminance level of 1200cd/m² and sunlight readable. The signages will have 4K resolution for 65" screen size dynamic brightness, anti-reflective glass. They will be of vandal & weather resistant enclosure (IP65) and aluminium encased body in a matt black finish. The signages will be fixed to ground and free standing.

Plans

Site Location Plan: 5031000 PLG XX XX X XX2 OF 11 received 4/11/2025

Digital Sign Locations 4-6 within RBC Boundary: 5031000 PLG XX XX X XX5 OF 11 received 4/11/2025

Digital Sign Location 4: 5031000 PLG XX XX X XX9 OF 11 received 4/11/2025

Digital Sign Location 5: 5031000 PLG XX XX X XX10 OF 11 received 4/11/2025

Digital Sign Location 6: 5031000 PLG XX XX X XX11 OF 11 received 4/11/2025

Planning History

Significant history across the University of Reading Site - none relevant to this application.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Environment Protection:

No comments.

Transport Development Control

This application is for the proposed installation of digital signs within the Whiteknights campus. The proposed signs will be located on pedestrian routes on privately owned University land and will not impact or cause a distraction on the public highway. Therefore, there are no transport objections to this application.

Three site notices were displayed adjacent to the location of the new signages, and no letters of representation were received.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF 2024

NPPG 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy OU4 - Advertisements

5. APPRAISAL

Advertisements may only be controlled with regard to two material considerations:

- Amenity –The effect of advertisement(s) on the appearance of buildings or the immediate vicinity of where they are displayed, including the character and appearance of the conservation area, the setting of Listed Buildings, and impact on non-designated heritage assets such as locally listed buildings
- Public safety – matters having a bearing on the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport, including the safety of pedestrians, or distraction of drivers or confusion with traffic signs.

The NPPF 2024 para 141 advises that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed...and that advertisements should be subject to control on only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Policies OU4 and OU5 state advertisements and shopfronts will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety.

Amenity

The proposed signs, at 1.8m in height are relatively large in their size and will naturally be prominent features. However, their positions spread through the campus means that will not appear cluttered. Furthermore, given this and the university nature of the site, no significant harmful design impacts would arise and no significant proliferation of advertisements or significant harm to visual amenity is considered to occur.

Regarding neighbouring amenities, the proposed signs would be sited a significant distance to any residential dwelling as such is not considered to impact their amenities.

Public Safety

Whilst clearly visible, the signage is not considered to cause obstruction or distraction to road/footway/cycle users. Transport Officers were consulted and raised no objection. However, a condition controlling luminance levels will be included for ongoing public safety/visual amenity. The applicant originally sought luminance of 2500 cd/m². This was considered overly and unnecessarily bright and will instead be conditioned to have a maximum luminance of 1200 cd/m² which has been agreed with the applicant. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in public safety terms in accordance with Policy TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6. CONCLUSION

The development has been assessed, and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Advertisement Consent can be granted. The signage is not considered to have a detrimental impact on amenity, public safety or the historic environment.