

BY PLANNING PORTAL

Planning and Development Control
Neath Port Talbot CBC
Civic Centre,
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ

29292/A5
15th January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 Conversion of poster advertisement display at 64 London Road, Neath, SA11 1LB

Please find enclosed an application for advertisement consent to upgrade an established paper and paste advertising display to a modern digital format capable of being operated from a central location without the need to visit each site individually.

This is part of an industry wide drive to modernise and upgrade advertising infrastructure to meet modern requirements. It is proposed to replace the existing advertising display on a like for like basis, using new display technology that is lightweight, durable, efficient, and can be easily erected, as it is of similar size and scale to the existing unit.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to update the existing display at 64 London Road, Neath, SA11 1LB with a digital equivalent which will display static advertisements on rotation.

The scheme will meet modern requirements of advertisers. This will bring a wide range of benefits as follows:

- Upgrade of sites lacking in investment;
- Reduction in vehicle trips for reposting adverts (i.e. from an average of 34 trips to 2);
- Consolidation and overall reduction in the number of advertising displays in the network;
- Eradicating the need to print posters and avoiding the associated waste involved in the production process;
- Ability to broadcast emergency messaging (e.g. public health messaging);
- Ability to use void periods for non-commercial campaigns;
- Opportunity for more creative real time and locally relevant advertising;
- Opportunity to integrate additional hardware to meet Smart City objectives.

Content will be controlled remotely in real time from a Networks Operation Centre (NOC) and the site will be monitored remotely 24/7 to facilitate responsive maintenance. Diagnostics software will report and resolve the majority of issues remotely.

The display would be limited to 300cd/m² at night time (on a full white display) in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals best practice guidance; *The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements PLG05 2015* and will adjust according to ambient brightness. The level of illuminance will be set on site manually to be at an appropriate level for the area and to mimic the poster being replaced.

The following conditions have become established as best practice for roadside digital displays and will be applied to control the operation of the digital poster in the interests of amenity and public safety:

- Static images to be displayed only (no moving or flashing images);
- Changes between adverts to take place instantly with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images;
- Maximum level of night time illuminance to be set to 300cd/m² in accordance with ILP Guidelines;
- Advertisements to change no more frequently than once every ten seconds.

Where circumstances demand, additional controls or variations of these conditions may be acceptable to the applicant. However, it would be expected that the Local Planning Authority present evidence based justification for deviating from the standard approach as any planning conditions imposed must meet the six tests as set out in National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

The Site

The proposal site is located on the end of London Road and faces onto the roundabout which merges Windsor Road, Eastland Road and Lewis Road. The Site supports a single non-illuminated billboard. The site surroundings are predominantly residential in character. The surrounding area is well-lit area and includes other examples of outdoor advertisements, including a number of illuminated advertisements.

There are no site constraints, and the site is not within a conservation area or the setting of a listed building.

The proposal site is an established location for advertising, having supported a since October 2009 or earlier, as demonstrated in Appendix 1.

Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (and 2017 Amendments) which states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account any material factors.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the National Planning Policy for Wales. Technical Advice Notes (TANs) supplement PPW and give greater clarification. TAN 7 'Outdoor Advertisement Control' provides advice on how Local Authorities should assess advertisement applications. The Guidance recognises "...the importance of advertisements to the national economy and should not stifle original designs or new display techniques" (Paragraph 4) and confirms that outdoor advertisements can only be controlled in the interests of "amenity" and "public safety" (Paragraph 6). The guidance states that in relation to assessing public safety, Local Planning Authorities are expected to have regard to advertisements'

“effect upon the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land (including the safety of pedestrians), on or over water, or in the air” (Paragraph 10).

TAN7 accepts that an applicant is not required to demonstrate a “need” for the advertisement and Paragraph 7 states that account should also be taken of factors which may be to the advantage of the amenity of the locality such as “adding appropriate colour and interest to a drab area or screening an eyesore”. Additionally, the Guidance states that Local Authorities must be consistent in the “general approach towards the determination of applications in particular localities” (Paragraph A3).

Planning Considerations

It is acknowledged by the applicant that the change in the type of illumination and the potential to increase the rate of change of the adverts would require express advertisement consent. The impact of these alterations has been considered in amenity and public safety terms as follows:

Amenity

On a strategic level the digitisation of the advertising network will see an overall reduction in the number of advertising sites in the area.

As the proposal seeks to replicate the existing advert and therefore mimic the existing situation, there will be minimal impact on the visual amenity of the surroundings. The size and positioning of the advertisement will remain the same and the level of illumination will reflect local and ambient conditions, with little material change to the site as it currently exists.

The controls proposed over the level of luminance at night are in line with the ILP Guidelines and industry best practice and will ensure that the proposed display does not cause any material harm to amenity. The context of the surroundings, including illuminated shop signage, illuminated company names, other illuminated adverts and street lighting establishes the site as appropriate for an illuminated advert of this type. Additional controls over the display will be considered if necessary to remedy a specific amenity concern.

The proposal would not be detrimental in either an immediate or wider sense. It is not within a conservation area, attached or adjacent to a listed building, or within proximity of any local heritage assets.

The character and setting of the site, street scene, and surrounding area is predominately residential, with commercial elements. The site is located at the gable end of a residential terrace and the advertisement is situated at an oblique angle to any residential windows.

Travelling south towards the site, road users would pass the proposed advertising display, which is offset to the left of the road and angled so that it is not located in direct eyeline. The proposal would not amount to clutter or contribute to any cumulative impacts, sitting comfortably in its visual context without harming amenity, the qualities of the site, or the character and appearance of the wider area.

Public Safety

When assessing public safety, the key considerations are whether the location is appropriate (i.e. undemanding on the driver) and whether the level of illumination and the sequential change between advertisements is controlled to prevent distraction from the driving task. As the principle of an advertisement has already been established at this location, the Council must only consider whether the proposed controls are sufficient to ensure that there is no additional distraction which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Should the Council’s Highways department identify any reasons why the location might be challenging to drivers, the applicant would be open to discussing alternative controls. However it should be noted that the proposed conditions are now well established

as best practice and as such any change (e.g. to the rate of change) would need to be evidence based and be specific to the location.

The proposed display would occupy the same setback and offset position as the existing unit, ensuring site lines and visibility splays are maintained. It would be seen by traffic travelling onto the roundabout, which is limited to 30mph, is well lit, level, and has excellent forward visibility. Highway users would therefore be fully capable of glancing content far in advance of the site without being distracted from the road or traffic conditions ahead. The cognitive demand on road users at this point is low as there are no unusual highway complexities which would require extra care to be taken. As such, drivers would be entirely capable of viewing advertisements whilst maintaining stopping distances and an awareness of surrounding traffic movements.

Under these circumstances, such a familiar feature of the locality and surrounding highway network, would not constitute a hazardous distraction to anyone exercising a reasonable standard of care. Consequently, the proposal would not give rise to public safety issues, which would prevent the granting of an express advertisement consent.

Conclusion

The proposal will not change the size, position or orientation of the advertising display. As such the established acceptability of the advertisement should not change materially. The proposed conditions to control the luminance of the screens and the operation of the digital screens will ensure that there is no additional harm to amenity or road safety.

For these reasons and the positive benefits set out above, it is considered that the application should be granted consent.

Application Submission

In order to complete the application, please find attached the following documentation:

- Completed application forms prepared by Barton Willmore;
- Letter Statement prepared by Barton Willmore (this letter);
- Architectural drawings and CGIs;
- 2920_PA_01 Site Location Plan
- 2920_PA_02 Existing Site Plan
- 2920_PA_03 Proposed Site Plan
- 2920_PA_04 Existing and Proposed Elevations.

Additionally, we will arrange payment to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for the sum of £460 to cover the cost of the Advertisement Consent application.

I trust that the above is clear and we look forward to receiving notification that the application has been registered in due course. Should you have any queries in relation to any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Dan Melling
Planner

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Enc.

Appendix 1

Insert date: October 2009



Insert Date: June 2015



Insert Date: May 2018

