

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Applicant: Elonex

Application Site: Baglan Way, Port Talbot, SA12 7BZ

Advertising Proposal: Illuminated digital advertising screen fronting the M4

The Application Site

The application site is located on Baglan Way, which runs directly parallel to the M4. It is owned by a private landlord, with Elonex installing the screen in the location as shown on the accompanying plans for the duration of the agreed term.

The site is accessed via Baglan Way and is currently covered by vegetation.

The proposed signage would be positioned to east of the drainage ditch, which runs through the wider site. It will be in a raised position, visible to traffic travelling in both directions of the M4.

The site is not of any heritage status or within a conservation area.

The site has been specifically selected as suitable for a digital advertising screens, as it sits on a long, straight, stretch of motorway, reducing risk of distraction to road users.

The Advertisement Proposed

The proposal is to erect a digital screen sign measuring 7.5 metres high x 5 metres wide. The sign would be internally-illuminated by LED lighting. It would be in '*portrait*' style.

The advertising space would be let or rented out to town centre businesses and advertisers but also utilised for public information campaigns. Its '*motorway*' position means the screen will have plenty of exposure to passing traffic, which makes it suitable for advertising the town as a shopping destination and similarly for, theatre, arts, culture and leisure activities, all of which can be promoted by the sign.

The advertising designs and images created would be sent electronically to the advertising screen.

The advertisements displayed would be static images only with no moving elements within the display space. The frequency of change of an advertisement would be dependent on demand for the space but no advertisement would be on display for less than a 10 second period although the sign could be let to a single advertiser for a 2 week time period. The changeover from one display to the next will be instantaneous.

The luminance and brightness of the sign will conform to the Institute of Lighting Engineers Technical report specifications.

The use of digital displays allows for advertising imagery to be changed remotely which greatly improves efficiency and drastically reduces the amount of site visits and physical waste from single use, printer posters which have been installed historically.

Elonex have installed 33 digital advertising screens fronting motorways across the UK, including between Junction 1 and 2 on the M5 in Birmingham, one of the busiest stretches of motorway in the UK.

The application forms part of Elonex's, national growth programme to install over 100 digital advertising screens across the UK in the coming years.

Benefits to Local Area

The proposed digital advertising screen will be of significant benefit not only to local businesses and residents, but also provide a positive contribution towards the heritage of Port Talbot.

I outline some key benefits below;

- Local events – operators of local events will have the opportunity to purchase advertising space on the screen, such as those run by the Princess Royal Theatre in Port Talbot. This will increase awareness of the event which in turn, would positively impact the number of attendees.
- Local museums – museums can also purchase advertising space, such as the Margam Stones Museum on Abbey Road. As the site/screen will be located on an arterial route, the adverts could have a strong impact on local tourism due to the amount of traffic that will be digesting the adverts
- Local businesses – local businesses such as those that operate trains to/from Port Talbot Parkway Railway Station (Transport for Wales, Great Western Railway) will have the opportunity to acquire advertising space on the screen and promote discounts, ticket sales, new routes etc. Similarly, this will have a positive impact on the local economy.

Furthermore, there are considerable benefits to those wishing to advertise on the screen;

- Upload time - Elonex manage screen content electronically. Advertisers can therefore see their content on the screen in a matter of hours. This is key to organisations such as travel companies, who need to advertise ticket sales on a regular basis
- Multiple messages – if a local retailer, for example, is promoting different stores, they can upload several messages to be included within their advertising time slot
- Specific times of the day – advertisers have the opportunity to promote different products at different times of the day. This benefits local restaurants for example, who may wish to advertise their breakfast deals during a slot from 6am – 10am, but then wish to change their promotion during the late morning slots for their lunch menu.

All the above-mentioned benefits will have a significant positive impact on the local economy.

Installation and Maintenance

Particular attention is to be given to the groundworks of this screen, due to its proximity to the motorway.

We are proposing a 2m(w) x 3m (l) x 1m (d) foundation supported by piling. This will be sufficient to avoid harming the adjacent ditches. However, we are happy to work with the planning authority to determine these depths if required.

A plan showing the proposed groundworks has been attached within the application. A full site and land survey will be undertaken prior to works commencing to review depths and stability of the adjacent ditches.

The screen will be hoisted by a crane into position and will be rear access, so there will be platforms in the middle of the screen which will be accessed by a fixed CAT ladder for future maintenance. A bridge is already in place to allow access to the screen position.

Following this, full RAMs and a maintenance programme will be produced prior to the commencement of any installation to ensure health and safety requirements are met at all times.

A private electrical supply will be brought across the ditch within the landlord's ownership to the screen position.

Amenity Assessment

The Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note 7 "Outdoor Advertisement Control" (TAN 7) states that;

"Free-standing roadside panels should always be in scale with the buildings on either side and in the surrounding area. Large poster hoardings situated at the back edge of the pavement, or in other prominent locations, usually have a dominant visual impact upon their surroundings, and they therefore need to be sited with particular care to ensure that their effect on pedestrians is not overwhelming"

In this case, the screen is in a raised position, with no other buildings present in the area. Motorists are familiar with seeing raised road signs showing detailed information on directions on this area of motorway. The screen is therefore considered compliant with the amenity guidance outlined with TAN 7. This is a robust roadside location on a major highway on a straight stretch of road.

The area is currently devoid of any digital advertising screens, and there is no other advertising and thus there would be no cumulative impact or advertising clutter.

On balance, it is not considered that the visual amenity of the site or the general area will be harmed by the proposed sign.

Public Safety

TAN 7 states that in assessing an advertisement's impact upon public safety, regard should be had to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic. This includes the likely behaviour of vehicle drivers who will see the advertisement. This is considered in full within the road safety assessment report submitted with the planning application.

The digital sign will display static poster images only. There will be no moving elements, animation, special effects etc.

Generally these are likely to be corporate signs and other brands and adverts commonly seen and instantly recognisable at a glance.

Traffic passing by the screen will be able to see it from a significant distance as it is located on a straight stretch of road where the speed limit is 50mph. The road layout is modern, well controlled, and well lit.

Generally, the public are conditioned to seeing a range of signage in and around roadside locations. Advertisements are now a common occurrence around arterial roads and highways and are not an unusual distraction

The signage is in a roadside location and the aim is for town centre businesses to be able to advertise and promote their profile and that of the town centre experience. Advertising is essential to business activity and the economy of the town centre which has suffered because of lockdown.

It is not considered that the proposed sign will have any public safety issues but if necessary special operating conditions can be attached to any consent granted.

Conditions

The following operating conditions are suggested,

- (i) The sign shall display static images only and there shall be moving elements
- (ii) The minimum display time for any advertisement shall be 10 seconds