

ARDENTLAND

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Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Development Control Section
The Quays, Brunel Way
Neath
SA11 2HZ

31 March 2021

Dear Sir / Madam

Application for Express Advertisement Consent, land at Sinclair VW, Dan-Y-Bryn Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1AL

Please find enclosed our clients application for Consent to Display an Advertisement under the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

This application seeks the following:

Provision of a landmark digital advertising site

The application comprises the following documents and drawings:

- Express Consent Application Form
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 050 rev – Site Location Plan
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 051 rev – Site Plan
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 060 rev – Elevations (existing & proposed)
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 061 rev – Specification Sheet
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 062 rev – Sketch view – proposed (southbound)
- Drawing no. T4611 A4 063 rev – Sketch view – proposed (northbound)
- Appendix 1 - Schedule of Suggested Special Conditions
- Appendix 2 - Crashmap extract

The fee has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Proposal

Following the Welsh Governments recent publication of the Digital Strategy for Wales, this application seeks to provide modern digital signage to serve the adjacent M4 motorway, being a nationally important transport and therefore economic corridor.

The Application Site

The proposal is part of the Sinclair VW dealership, and set within a small parcel of land at the car dealers site on the east side of Dan-Y-Bryn Road.

Application Site Planning History

The host site has a commercial consents in place, including for Sinclairs own signage.

The host site is not within a Conservation Area or a Heritage Asset.

Adjacent Land Uses

The host site is located adjacent (and thus readily visible from) the raised M4 motorway and centrally on the host sites car sales area.

The bulk of the M4 side wall is to the immediate east of the site, to the north of the site is a car sales forecourt & building, to the west is the main dealership site with Aberavon RFC beyond.

To the south of the site is the remainder of the car sales forecourt.

Further along Dan-Y-Bryn Road land uses are residential, chiefly traditional terraced houses, on streets aligned north-east to south-west to the west of the site and south-east to north-west to the south of the site.

Background to the Application & Advantages

Our clients wish to provide a modern and flexible signage opportunity to the area to allow sustainable, relevant, locally focused, and timely messaging.

The use of digital advertising positively contributes to Mission 4 of the Digital strategy for Wales publication and supports the other 5 Missions by providing a public realm showcase to both Government & Commercial campaigns.

Elsewhere in the Country and across the UK we have seen the benefit of the flexibility that digital advertising which can include public messages (such as Governments recent Essential Journeys Only campaigns) and the more ready display of non-commercial and third sector messages during void periods.

The proposed displays would each be 5m wide x 7.5m high and enclosed in high quality but simple framing. The displays would present a range of static messages, each lasting for not less than 10 seconds. The change between each message would be almost instantaneous with no animation or special effects.

The use of digital technology allows the proposed signs to be operated remotely thus materially reduces vehicle movements to manage the signs when compared to a banner or traditional fixed sign advertising with only periodic inspection and servicing being required once installed.

The use of digital technology also completely removes the requirement to print and fix material to sign boards which is then disposed of each time the display is updated and is therefore more sustainable.

Recognising the illuminated nature of the proposed displays, we look to levels recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals ('The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements' PLG05, 2015); that report recommends a maximum luminance level of 300 candelas/sqm in suburban areas at night (there is no maximum limit for periods during the day) and we have suggested a Condition set this level to safeguard against the potential for any illumination impact from the proposal.

Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, supplemented by Technical Advice Note (Wales) 7.

Regulation 4 states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety taking into account any material factors.

TAN7 provides a practical framework to assist decision making and reinforces the importance that advertising has to the national economy.

Amenity

As explored above, the application site is a part of a car dealerships forecourt and set adjoining the bulk of the raised motorways side wall, as such the supporting structure is set back from the streetscape and contained by these adjacent and dominating land uses.

The dealership itself is (in normal conditions) a busy site with a range of cars available to view on the open sales space on either side of Dan-Y-Bryn Road.

Associated with that use is the usual range of advertising and promotional activity along with the modern glazed elevations of the dealership buildings.

To the rear of the VW dealership is Aberavon RFCs ground, with its range of terraces and buildings surrounding the pitch. The pitch is lit by 4 large latticework lighting towers which give way to views of dock infrastructure and chimneys beyond.

More locally to the application site than these skyline features, we consider that the scheme is readily accommodated on the host site.

The layout of streets to the west of the M4 is such that very few houses have views towards the site from principal rooms with the narrow traditional streets crating

their own environments with limited views beyond. A ready example of this is the limited views of the (much taller) lighting columns at Aberavon RFC, even to those in close proximity.

Aberavon's ground also provides a buffer and physical separation to those in the Manor Street & Tanygroes Street area where street alignment is east to west and thus faces towards the rear (thus the non-illuminated side) of the proposed displays.

To those on the east side of the motorway, chiefly on Pen-Y-Cae Road, the faces of proposed displays will be visible obliquely across boundary planting and the high-level lit, heavily trafficked motorway and in the context of Port Talbot itself beyond.

While visible, the proposed displays are unlikely to be harmful to their proposed setting.

Public Safety (Highways Safety)

The M4 immediately to the north of the application site has a good safety record with no incidents recorded as being serious or fatal in the last 10 years of reporting.

Within 100m either side of the application site, 9 incidents classified as slight have been recorded in the last 10 years of data.

Locations of these incidents are shown at Appendix 2.

The M4 between junctions 39 & 40 carries c.69,000 vehicles per day (DfT count points 40503 & 84065), equating to over 2.5m vehicles per annum showing a remarkably low accident rate, reflecting the straight-forward, easily driven nature of the road.

It is our view that the proposal will not harm this situation, the proposed displays have a good forward range of visibility, appearing gradually on approach in the drivers forward cone of visibility. They will not obstruct any official road sign or overhead gantry. This approach to site selection and design therefore accords with best practice across the UK, including the Waterman report commissioned by Transport for London in March 2013 who surmised (inter-alia) that research indicated that roadside digital advertising is not inherently unsafe but should be operationally managed in accordance with site specific constraints.

Therefore, as an appropriately lit unit, displaying (by its nature) simple messages, logos or images the proposed sign will be readily absorbed (or ignored) as part of the driving task particularly as we consider that there is nothing unusual or complicated about the highway network here to give rise to special road safety concerns.

As such, we consider it extremely unlikely that any driver who is exercising a reasonable degree of care for their own and others safety would be distracted or confused by the proposed displays.

In terms of structural safety, the proposed sign is supported entirely on the host site with the displays oversailing private land at high level, i.e. no part of the proposed display is on or over the highway.

Further, the supporting pole is set back from the motorway wall to allow mutual access for inspection, maintenance and repair.

Summary

The intention of the scheme is to present a simply finished, high quality installation that makes digital technology available to advertisers in support of economic growth.

The displays are to be operated by Route Media who are based in Cardiff and provide out of home advertising space across Wales and the wider United Kingdom.

In amenity terms, we consider that while the proposed displays will be visible (as they are intended to be), their simple, slim design will allow them to sit amongst other tall structures in the area while standing on its own design merits and providing visual interest in the form of a landmark structure to those on the M4.

At lower levels, the support and base of the structure will be easily accommodated by the host site and subservient to the adjoining motorway structure.

The proposal is not adjacent to any heritage assets or other sensitive land uses.

As a carefully sited scheme in the drivers natural forward range of vision, we consider that the proposed displays can be readily seen (or ignored) and so would not cause any automatic harm to public safety either during installation or operation.

Should you have any queries in respect of this application or require additional detail we would be happy to discuss this with you.

Yours faithfully.

Stuart Wellman MRICS

Director
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Appendix 1

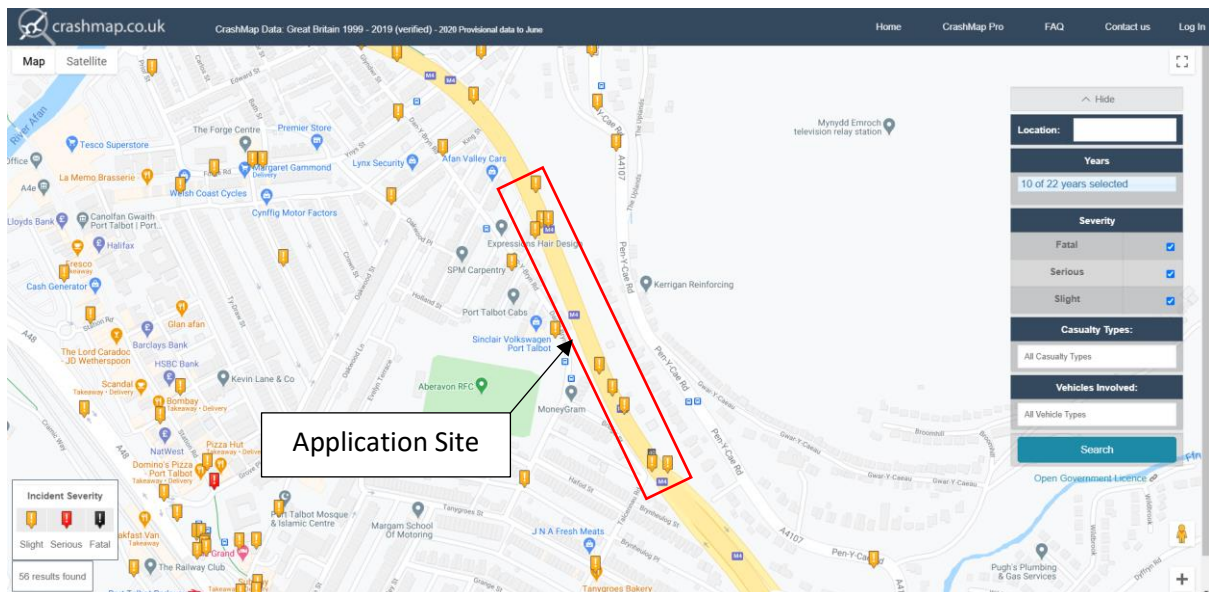
List of Suggested Special Conditions

1. Rate of change shall be no more than once every 10 seconds.
2. Illumination shall not exceed 300cd/m² at night.

Appendix 2

Crashmap Extract

Map produced 30 March 2021



CrashMap Data: Great Britain 1999 - 2019 (verified) - 2020 Provisional data to June

Data source Department for Transport

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