JT/93456

23 December 2024

Manchester City Council
Planning
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Sir/Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (CONTROL OF ADVERTISEMENTS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2007
761-765 WILMSLOW ROAD, DIDSBURY, M20 6RN
PROPOSED ERECTION OF A SMALL FORMAT D6 ADVERTISEMENT DISPLAY
PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-13660550

This cover letter has been prepared on behalf of Wildstone Estates Limited, an outdoor media infrastructure provider, and is submitted in support of an application for advertisement consent to erect one new freestanding D6 small format advertisement display at the above site.

The site comprises a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) owned by Motor Fuel Group (MFG), the largest independent forecourt operator in the UK. The Company currently has around 1,200 sites which offer customers a growing dual-fuel strategy, a versatile valeting offer and a convenient retail and 'food to go' portfolio. Wildstone Estates Limited is working in partnership with MFG to modernise existing advertising infrastructure across the MFG portfolio and where possible to rationalise as well as declutter existing advertisements, which aligns with an industry-wide programme.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to erect one freestanding D6 small format advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation. This is a standard small-format advertisement, which is found across the UK in roadside, retail and transportation environments. There are over 75,000 6 sheets in the UK. The advertisement which is the subject of this application is primarily aimed at users of the PFS rather than road users.

The proposed D6 small format advertisement display has the same dimensions as a standard 6-sheet hoarding, measuring 1.23m(w) x 2.4m(h) x 0.22m (d). The proposed advertisement will utilise LCD digital technology, which is durable, efficient and can be easily erected with minimal engineering. The quality of the image produced will mimic that of a traditional paper-and-paste display. The proposed display will meet modern requirements and 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.

Alder King LLP is a Limited Liability Partnership registered in England and Wales No. OC306796. Registered Office Pembroke House, 15 Pembroke Road, Bristol BS8 3BA. A list of Members is available at the registered office.

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 can respond within 24 hours to any issues which require attendance.

Conditions

All advertisements are subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations. The vast majority of digital advertisement consents now also operate within an established set of parameters that include controls over the level of luminance and the proposed speed and rate of change between adverts. These "industry standard" conditions have evolved, to address common concerns relating to amenity and public safety.

The proposed display will operate with a system of threshold controls, timers and light sensors to ensure that the luminance never exceeds the ILP guideline figure at night time, with lower thresholds set on more sensitive sites.

Newly published guidelines by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) have introduced a new set of model conditions that can be applied to advertisement consents going forward. The model conditions are set out within Appendix 1 of Technical Note 5 "The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays" (PLG05/23) and are included with this statement for clarity.

The Site

The proposal site is located within the wholly commercial entity of the PFS, and the D6 small format advertisement display will be positioned within that site boundary. The PFS can be found off Wilmslow Road. The surroundings of the advertisement site include the illuminated forecourt of the PFS and the existing large illuminated totem for the PFS. The advertisement display will be erected on a small parcel of land, at the eastern edge of the PFS. The immediate surroundings of the site area can be viewed in **Figure 1** below.

The site area contains a mix of advertisements including the large totem for the PFS and fascia signage on the PFS building itself. The totem and the fascia signs are illuminated.

The surroundings include a mix of commercial and residential dwellings. Wilmslow Road primarily has commercial uses at the ground floor level, with residential dwellings on the upper floors.

Under the categorisations set out in the newly published ILP Guide PLG 05/23, the proposal would be classified as within Environmental Zone 3 (sub-urban).

The site is not within or near a conservation area. There are no nationally designated buildings within proximity of the site.

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Figure 1: View of the site



Source: Google Street View.

Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the "Regulations"). Regulation 3 states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, in addition to any other relevant factors.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In accordance with Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account cumulative impacts. As described in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) the regime is a "lighter touch" than the system for obtaining planning permission for development. The NPPG also clarifies that a local plan does not have to contain advertisement policies and that if such policies are considered necessary to protect the unique character of a particular area, these should be evidence-based.

Local planning policy from Manchester's Core Strategy 2012 to 2027 which was adopted on 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Development Plan, along with the saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995). UDP Policy DC15 states that advertisements should be considered only in the interest of amenity and public safety.

Planning Considerations

The proposed small-scale digital poster is considered to be appropriate in principle for a new D6 small-format advertisement display. In line with planning regulations, the impact of the proposal has been considered in amenity and public safety terms and are addressed in turn below:

Amenity

National Planning Practice Guidance confirms, in Paragraph 079, that “In practice, “amenity” is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement…”. In this case, the immediate neighbourhood is the petrol filling station itself since, in the context of the wider setting, the filling station structures (shop/canopy/pumps and other features) will remain by the far dominant visual attractor. It is a design requirement that petrol filling station forecourts must be “adequately illuminated” at all times, with a minimum design illuminance of 100 lux at ground level (Section 9.5.6, APEA Blue Book – 4th Edition, April 2018). Therefore, the context of the site is one of an already developed, well-illuminated commercial operation. The effect on amenity of the new proposed D6 advertisement on this well-lit immediate neighbourhood will therefore be minimal.

The surrounding advertisements, street lighting, and illuminated forecourt establish the site as appropriate for a new illuminated display of this type. Furthermore, the proposed D6 advertisement is smaller in scale than the surrounding PFS infrastructure and the illuminated advertisements such as the totem. All sensitive frontages around the petrol station are sufficiently distanced from where the small-scale D6 display will be situated. As such, the proposed advertisement will have a negligible impact on the surrounding environment.

The advertisement display will have sensors within the panel that allow for the screen to be appropriately illuminated during the daytime. The position and location of the proposed small format D6 advertisement and the light-adjusting capabilities of the sign ensure that the digital panel will not adversely impact the amenity of the immediate or wider area. By day it will appear the same as paper signs.

During hours of darkness, the digital display will be illuminated in the context of an also illuminated petrol filling station operation. Following the categorisations set out in the newly published ILP Guide PLG 05/23, it is recommended that the maximum nighttime luminance of both of the displays should be set at 300cd/m2. The reduction in night-time luminance due to being in Environmental Zone 3 will further mitigate any potential impacts at night and ensure that the display is not dominant.

The consent being sought is temporary and the suitability of the site has been assessed based on the current environment. As such, the small format D6 advertisement would not be detrimental in either an immediate or wider sense and would be appropriately located.

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. The PFS is a well-established host of advertising relating to the business premises and products available. The proposed advertisement is intended to be viewed by users of the filling station whilst they are filling their vehicles.

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 be unusual and would need to be evidence-based and specific to the location.

Those travelling south on Wilmslow Road will be able to glance at the new small-scale advertisement. The road is a straight, well-lit, and uncomplicated road and so, therefore, the proposed advertisement will not pose as a distraction. The D6 poster would be seen primarily by those manoeuvring in and around the petrol station as it will be positioned on the edge of the PFS boundary. Those navigating around the petrol station will be doing so at a very low speed and will not be adversely affected by the presence of the D6 poster.

Although the sign will attract attention, as all signs are designed to do, it is not considered that the proposed display is so unusual or the road characteristics so complicated that the advertisement within the vicinity of the PFS would cause a public safety concern. The proposed panel would incorporate illumination levels which align with the ILP's Guidance, and this intensity is considered wholly acceptable for the location. The panel would be viewed within the context of its surroundings which is considered to be an acceptable location for advertising in highway terms.

Conclusion

The proposal seeks to erect a new small format D6 digital advertising panel in the boundary of the PFS on Wilmslow Road. The digital poster is considered to be an appropriate location for advertising in principle and will contribute to the wider modernisation of the sites which sit within the MFG portfolio. The size and scale of the small format D6 display is de-minimis in the context of the PFS. The new D6 poster will not generate visual clutter on the street scene.

The proposed conditions to control the operation of the advertisement including the luminance of the digital display will ensure that there is no adverse impact on amenity or public safety. For these reasons and the positive benefits set out, it is not considered that the proposal would have any detrimental impact on amenity or public safety and as such should be capable of being granted consent subject to appropriate conditions to control the operation of the advertisement.

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Application Submission

To complete the application, please find attached the following documentation:

- Completed application forms
- Letter Statement (this letter);
- Architectural drawings including;
    - 24369/PA/01 Site Location Plan
    - 24369/PA/02 Existing Site Plan
    - 24369/PA/03 Proposed Site Plan
    - 24369/PA/04 Proposed Site Plan
    - 24369/PA/05 Existing and Proposed Elevations
    - 24369/PA/06 Specification
    - 24369/PA/07 CGI
- Appendix 1: Model Conditions

Additionally, we will arrange payment to the Council to cover the cost of the Advertisement Consent application.

We 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 concerning any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully
For ALDER KING LLP



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Senior Planner

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Enc(s) as above