

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0581
Valid 12/12/2023

LAND AT
LEEK HOCKEY CLUB
MACCLESFIELD ROAD
LEEK

THE ERECTION AND DISPLAY
OF A SINGLE FREESTANDING
6 X 3 METRE LED DISPLAY
UNIT

(ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Character and appearance
- Impact on public safety
- Impact on amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies to the south-west of Macclesfield Road, A523 within the western edge of Leek which follows the River Churnet a short distance to the north of the site. The land is associated with Leek Hockey Club which comprises of a single-storey part flat-roofed part-brick part-timber building serving the clubhouse, sports pitches and a car park.

There is a grass verge that runs along the perimeter of the car park. It sits behind a low rise stone wall that runs along the road pavement. Open land and fields lie to the north and west. Industrial areas lie to the other side of the road to the north-east and east of the site. To the south lies a row of terraced dwellings which face Macclesfield Road.

PROPOSAL

Advertisement consent is sought for a free-standing illuminated advertisement sign that will sit on a grass verge associated with Leek Hockey Club. The LED Display advert screen will be 3m by 6m wide and will be supported by steel poles that will have an overall height of 5.9m. The will face onto the road to oncoming vehicles towards the Leek Town Centre.

The advert will have a maximum luminance level are 300 cd/m2. 300cd/m2 during the night and during the daytime, the illumination will be adjusted by light sensors to make the image visible but not overly bright in the ambient light.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Town and County Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

DC1 Design Considerations

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 141

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2020/0590	Proposed Replacement Club House	Decision 22/01/21
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SMD/2020/0584	Proposed alterations and extensions to the club house.	Decision 18/12/20
SMD/2012/0557	Proposed new changing and disabled facilities	Approve 01/06/12

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 08/07/21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 05/07/21

Public Comments None

Leek Town Council Leek Town Council Planning Committee resolved to have no objection to the erection of an LED display unit at Leek Hockey Club.

Staffordshire County Council Highways No objection subject to conditions to meet luminance levels for the size.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Principle of development

The application site is located within the Development Boundary of Leek; a 'town' as identified by Local Plan policies SS2. The policy supports the retention and growth of existing businesses within the town, employment, entertainment and tourism without leading to congestion of the town centre.

The proposal is for the installation of signage on the grounds of a recreational club. It is not entirely clear what the signage will advertise. However, it is presumed for third parties to build revenue for the club. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development will meet the aims of the Leek Area Strategy.

Impacts on public amenity

According to the Government Planning Guidance on Advertisements, in determining applications for consent, consideration should be given to public amenity. "Amenity" is not defined exhaustively in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. However, "amenity" is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement or site for the display of advertisements, where residents or passers-by will be aware of the advertisement.

In assessing amenity, the local planning authority would always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood: for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.

In reference to the Local Plan, policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place.

The proposal will introduce a large signage within a prominent location into Leek at the entrance of the Leek Hockey Club. The views from the A523 when coming into Leek are relatively open with rolling hills to the east of the site. Despite the Victorian terraced houses adjoining the site and industrial site on the opposite road, views from Macclesfield Road, towards where the sign would be positioned are across the Hockey field to the open countryside beyond. As such on this side of the road, the character is very much semi-rural and gives the impression of leaving the town and of the presence of countryside beyond. Further along the main road, the landscape changes to being more built up with notable advertisement billboards that backs onto Leek Football Grounds before the Macclesfield road roundabout. However, this differs from the Hockey club site as these advertisements are viewed against the backdrop of built development.

The advertisement will be an imposing feature within a relatively open setting that is a notably characteristic of the approach into Leek Town Centre. Despite its intended nature, the signage would be considerably bulky for the grass area it sits on which is made prominent by its free standing structure on a modest open grounded site. The LED signage would also add to this incongruous feature in this setting as signage of this scale and type are better suited within a more built up area where there is more commercial activity.

The agent notes that historically there was a large billboard until 2021 attached to the side of the end terraced known as 111 Macclesfield road. While there was a large sign near the site, the case officer gives this limited weight on the basis that the billboard is no longer there, not illuminated and arguably a 2D structure in comparison to a free-standing screen.

As such, the signage would conflict with Policy DC1 of the Local Plan and principles set out in the Town and County Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007.

Impacts on Public Safety

Local Plan policy DC1 and paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2020) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The signage will be visible to drivers towards the gateway to Leek setback from the road next to the access of the Leek Hockey Club. The applicant has stated in the application form that the maximum luminance level are 300 cd/m². 300cd/m² during the night and during the daytime, the illumination will be adjusted by light sensors to make the image visible but not overly bright in the ambient light.

Staffordshire County Council as Highway Authority has been consulted on the matter of highway safety. The Highway officer has noted that the illuminated display meets the luminance levels for the size and as such raises no objection subject to condition to ensure the illuminated display meets the luminance levels for the size, the Highway Authority has no objection.

Therefore, on County Highway's comments, it does not pose any risk to public safety.

CONCLUSION

The proposed signage by virtue of its scale, illuminance and bulk is considered to diminish the quality and character of the immediate locality. It would introduce an incongruous feature within a relatively open setting that is a notably characteristic of this gateway into Leek Town Centre.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to conflict with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020), the NPPF

(2023) and Town and County Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007. As such the application is recommended for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refuse

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 24/1/24

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council