

Highways Assessment

Site Address: Gable at 205 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, M25 1JF

Proposal: Conversion of billboard advertising display to D-Poster advertising display

Prepared for Wildstone Estates Limited

Wildstone Ref:	19940
Local Planning Authority:	Bury Council
Application Ref:	70689
Date:	May 2025

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – ILP guidance excerpt

APPENDIX 2 – Applications 65338, 66289

APPENDIX 3 – Digital and Paper Paste display comparison

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Highways Assessment Report is prepared on behalf of Wildstone Estates Limited, in support of its application for express consent at 205 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, M25 1JF.
- 1.2 Express consent is sought from Bury Council for the erection of a D-Poster digital advertising display measuring 6m x 3m (D-Poster).
- 1.3 The application site is identified in **Figure 1 - 3** below and the applicants submitted drawing pack.



1.

Figure 1: Site Location



Figure 2: Street level view of site

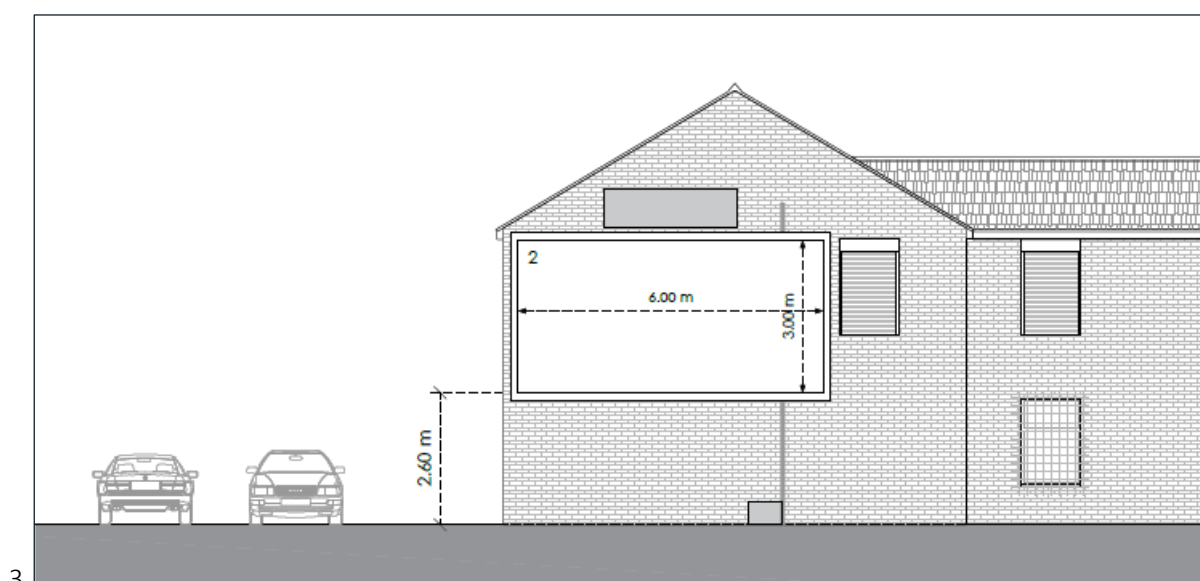


Figure 3: Elevation and view of proposed D-Poster

2 Advertisements and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Advertisements are controlled with regards to their effect on amenity and public safety. In England, this is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations).
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) under paragraph 141 reiterates this approach, with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) setting out more detailed advice.
- 2.3 In planning terms, amenity is taken to mean the effect on the visual and aural amenity in the immediate area or site. In terms of public safety, the standard applied is whether an advertisement itself, or the exact

location for its display, is likely to be so distracting or confusing that it prevents individuals from exercising a reasonable standard of care for themselves and others in the vicinity.

Digital Advertising Displays

- 2.4 Digital advertising displays are now common features across the UK's towns and cities and are the modern standardized format for presenting large format advertisements. Due to the improvements in technology and the methods for control and monitoring, the digital advertising displays are able to present advertising images on rotation, with a strict control over their illumination.
- 2.5 These methods of control are typically enforced by the imposition planning conditions attached to a grant of express consent issued by the local planning authority. These conditions are underpinned by their requirement to be demonstrably reasonable and necessary in the interests of amenity and public safety.
- 2.6 In light of the above requirements, applications for express advertising consent refer to the guidance and advice published by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) when considering how to control and operate digital advertising displays. The ILP have produced the following guidance for digital displays 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements Including Digital Displays 2023 (PLG 05) (BIADD).

Supporting Guidance

- 2.7 The guidance recommends how to assess illuminated advertisements and makes a series of recommendations relating to their brightness, intensity, and operation. The ILP guidance states that the uniformity of luminance across a defined illuminated area must be kept within reasonable limits so as to ensure a pleasing and effective result. This is to ensure that the displayed advert is not too bright and remains legible (respectively).
- 2.8 The ILPs recommendations are set out in Section 10 (See **Appendix 1** for excerpt) of its report under the title '*Requirements for illuminated advertisements including digital displays*' Those relevant to digital advertisements are as follows:
- During the night, digital displays in suburban / urban areas (Environmental Zones E3, E4) with a display area greater than 10 square meters should not exceed 300 candela per square meter (Table 10.4 reproduced below). During daylight sign luminance is recommended not to exceed 5,000 candela per square meter (Table 10.5 reproduced below).

Table 10.4 Recommended maximum night time permitted values of display luminance

Light Technical Parameter	Maximum sign luminance (L_s) cd/m^2				
	Environmental zones				
Sign surface area	E0	E1	E2	E3	E4
0 to < 5 m^2	0	25	200	300	300
5 to < 20 m^2	0	0	200	300	300
$\geq 20 \text{ m}^2$	0	0	100	200	300

Table 10.5 Recommended maximum daytime permitted values of sign luminance

Daylight ambient Illuminance (E_h) [lux]	Sign Luminance [cd/m^2]
Up to 3,500	≤ 400
3,501 to 8,500 (overcast day)	$\leq 1,000$
8,501 to 15,000 (bright day with cloud cover)	$\leq 2,500$
15,001 to 25,000 (bright sunny day)	$\leq 3,500$
25,001 to 42,000 (direct sunlight)	$\leq 5,000$
42,001 and above	$> 5,000$

- The ILP also recommends that digital advertisements should not change more than once every five seconds and that, moving images, animation, video, or full motion images should not be displayed at locations where they could present a hazard.
- More general considerations relate to a requirement for a system that controls the luminance, the potential for curfews, and the changing time of sunrise and sunset throughout the year.

2.9 Transport for London (TfL) have also produced nationally accepted guidance for the erection of digital advertising displays¹. The guidance considers that whilst research indicates that digital roadside advertising is not inherently unsafe, moving images or advertising with complex information is likely to add to the level of distraction. The balance is therefore in ensuring that the level of concentration is required from the driver.

2.10 It acknowledges that digital advertisements are highly controllable, and it is therefore possible to adequately limit any potential for distraction by controlling the type, brightness, form of change, and interval between advertisements, as well as providing detailed consideration to appropriate locations and

¹ Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice, Transport for London (2013)

positioning. It is understood that these have been a factor in the applicant's submission, as detailed within applicants cover letter and associated appendices.

3 Site Background & Existing Highway Conditions

Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The application site is located on the gable end wall of 205 Bury Old Road and hosts a 6m x 3m 48-sheet advertising display. Highway users travelling south on Bury Old Road heading towards central Manchester will view the site on approach.
- 3.2 The proposed D-Poster would simply replace an out dated billboard, whilst matching its size, scale, orientation, and appearance. It would not appear as incongruent or alien feature to approaching highway users, rather it would present as an integrated feature of the street scene.
- 3.3 It is positioned within a commercially orientated environment where large format roadside advertising is an established and accepted feature.
- 3.4 Highway users travelling towards the site would view the proposed D-Poster alongside commercial built form; the D-Poster as a commercial feature would not therefore appear as an isolated, standalone, or incongruent entity. Furthermore, the setback positioning of the D-Poster, in conjunction with its low key appearance, and the size, scale, and massing of the adjacent built form, ensures it would be seen as an overbearing or over dominant feature of the street scene.
- 3.5 A review of planning applications in the wider area reveal that the local planning authority have granted express consent (subject to conditions) for near identical displays, in both scale and operation; on Derby Way, and at 61 Rochdale Road to the west, see **Appendix 2** (Application ref: 65338 and 66289 respectively).
- 3.6 The presence of the extant express consents is a material consideration in this assessment. The Regulations state that local planning authorities should ensure that they are consistent in their general approach towards the determination of applications in particular (and similar) locations.

Prevailing Highway Conditions

- 3.7 The proposal site is located adjacent to Bury Old Road; an uncomplicated and straightforward section of highway which is limited to 30mph, is straight, level, well lit, and has good forward visibility. The proposed D-Poster would occupy a setback position from the highway and be seen in forward and offside views; there would be no impact to visibility splays or sight lines. A signalised pedestrian crossing lies 60m to the north of the site, however it is beyond the sites influence and its usage would not be impacted upon by the proposal; traffic signal visibility and interpretation would remain unaffected by the proposed D-Poster at all times. Highway users would not be distracted from traffic signals or the pedestrian crossing.

Existing Road Safety Record

- 3.8 Crashmap (www.crashmap.com) reports that the site has an enviable highway safety record, with no incidents recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site over the past five years (2018-2022 inclusive). See **Figure 4** below.

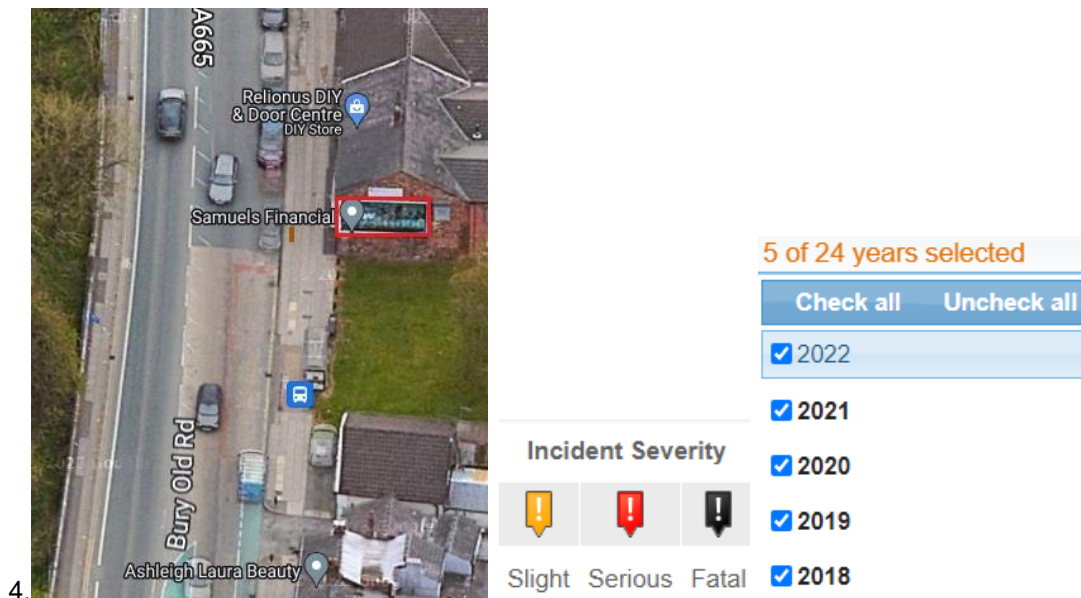


Figure 4: Excerpt from www.crashmap.co.uk

- 3.9 The favourable incident history, and the straightforward / uncomplex nature of the highway at this point, determines that the cognitive demand on road users approaching the site would be low, enabling them to readily assimilate advertisements without issue or distraction. As such, drivers would be entirely capable of assimilating advertisements whilst maintaining an awareness of surrounding traffic movements and sighting of the road ahead.
- 3.10 Based on the foregoing, this indicates that the site's use for advertising does not present a materially harmful distraction to users of the adjoining highway, nor is the record of the highway a pressing concern in the context of the proposed D-Poster display.

4 Proposed Advertisement

- 4.1 The proposal seeks to replace a longstanding billboard display which benefits from Class 13 deemed consent at the gable wall of no. 205 Bury Old Road. The billboard is to be updated and replaced with a D-Poster slimline digital display which will enable the presentation of six advertisements over a one minute cycle (1/10s).
- 4.2 The proposed D-Poster has the same dimensions as the existing 48-sheet billboard which measures a standard 6m wide x 3m high x 0.1m in depth. The proposed D-Poster will be elevated 2.6m above ground level and will match the existing billboards orientation. The proposal's new display technology is lightweight, durable, efficient, sustainable, and can be easily erected with minimal engineering. The appearance of the images produced will mimic that of a traditional format billboard as demonstrated within **Appendix 3**.

- 4.3 The D-Poster display would operate with a system of threshold controls, timers, and light sensors to ensure that the luminance never exceeds the Institute of Lighting Professional's (ILP) BIADD guidelines described above.
- 4.4 The BIADD document provides model conditions for digital illuminated displays to which the proposed D-Poster would adhere. The model conditions also form the basis for the proposal's recommended conditions which are included at **Appendix 4**. Conditions controlling the operation of the proposed digital display are also set out below.
- There shall be no moving images, animation, video or full motion images displayed unless otherwise permitted by this consent.
 - In the hours of darkness, the advertisement display luminance shall be no greater than 300cd/m² in accordance with the recommended maximum night time luminance value set out for Environmental Zone 3 in Table 10.4 of The Institution of Lighting Professionals PLG 05 document 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays'.
 - In daylight hours, the advertisement display luminance shall be controlled in order to reflect ambient light conditions (to ensure it is neither too bright or too dull). It shall at all times be no greater than 5,000cd/m² in accordance with the recommended maximum daytime luminance values set out in Table 10.5 of The Institution of Lighting Professionals PLG 05 document 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays'.
 - Unless otherwise permitted, the minimum display time for each advertisement shall be 10 seconds and the advertisement shall not include any features which would result in interactive messages / advertisements being displayed.
 - The interval between successive advertisements shall be no greater than 1 second and the complete display shall change without effect. The display to include a mechanism to default to a blank or black screen in the event of malfunction, or if the advertisement is not in use.
 - No images displayed shall resemble official road traffic signs, traffic lights or traffic matrix signs.
- 4.5 The applicant details that the proposal is submitted as part of a nation-wide project to upgrade traditional advertising hoardings to a modern digital format. The proposal will enable an overall reduction in advertising displays as multiple campaigns can be supported by single D-Poster.

5 Public Safety & Highway Appraisal

- 5.1 It is understood that digital advertisements have the potential to be more notable than traditional format advertisements. However, subject to the appropriate controls, calibration, and monitoring, the general appearance of the proposed D-Poster display would not be markedly different to the current traditional format display as highlighted above.
- 5.2 Advertising displays within the wider locality are common place, and drivers are clearly used to assimilating advertising content without detracting from the safe use of their vehicles or the highway network. This correlates with the advice of the PPG which indicates that there are less likely to be public safety issues where advertisements are located within environments that support commercial features, are adjacent to main roads, are set back from the highway, and where they do not conflict with the

sighting of signage, traffic signals, or highway related apparatus. This certainly reflects extant site location and D-Poster proposal.

- 5.3 Furthermore, industry standards for roadside media dictate that advertisements should ideally contain no more than 7 to 10 words to be effective. Therefore, whilst there are no planning controls governing the content of any advert media, this would significantly reduce the cognitive demand on those viewing the advert, making it simple to process and assimilate.
- 5.4 This is aided by the applicant's willingness to subscribe to a high degree of regulation with regards the D-Poster's operation. With no moving elements or flashing lights, and at a advert frequency of once every 10 seconds, there is an appreciable amount of time for passers-by to assimilate the content of an advertisement without it being onerous or a cause of distraction. This would comply not only with the recommendations of guidance explored elsewhere in this Report, but with other, similar, consents permitted by the local planning authority in the locality – and elsewhere in its administrative area.
- 5.5 The in-built controls proposed to control the luminance of the display area are also significant. Compliance with the ILP guidance and regulation by an ambient sensor and timing schedule are strongly advised in this instance, and accepted by the applicant. This can be secured by an appropriately worded condition in the interests of amenity and public safety (see **Appendix 4**).
- 5.6 As set out in Section 3, the prevailing highway conditions have been demonstrated to be favourable. There are no safety concerns or issues arising from the section of highway network on approach to, or at the site location. The Highway is relatively straightforward and uncomplex, allowing highway users to view the site whilst taking forward views of the highway environment. More over the nature and character of the surrounding area insures that the proposed digital display would not appear alien or jarring. The signalised pedestrian crossing to the south lies beyond the influence of the digital display, with the traffic signals the dominant feature of the highway for approaching motorists. There is no evidence to suggest that the signalised pedestrian crossing would be affected by the proposed advertising display.
- 5.7 Overall, subject to the limitations set out by Wildstone Estates Limited it is considered that the proposal for a D-Poster would not detract from the safety of the highway environment surrounding the site location. A driver exercising a reasonable standard of care for their own and others' safety would unlikely experience any material distraction due to the proposed advertising display, so long as advertisements are static, rotate once every 10 seconds, and comply with the ILPs guidance and recommended operational conditions for the control of digital displays. The full set of recommended conditions are contained within **Appendix 4**.

6 Summary & Conclusion

- 6.1 Wildstone Estates Limited seek express consent for the erection of a D-Poster digital advertising display measuring 6m x 3m (D-Poster) at 205 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, M25 1JF.
- 6.2 The standard is whether the proposed digital advertising display at the above site location is likely to be so distracting or confusing that it creates a hazard to, or endangers people in the vicinity who are taking reasonable care for their own and others safety.

- 6.3 The evidence indicates there are no highway safety concerns within close proximity of the application site, demonstrated by the lack of any recorded incidents over the past five years. There is no indication or concern that the surrounding highway environment would be degraded by the proposed digital advertising display.
- 6.4 Advertisements are common place throughout the surrounding area and the local planning authority have granted similar proposals nearby. Such grants have, however, been conditional upon a high degree of regulation, and this should be no different in this case. The applicant has advanced several conditions, chiefly aimed at minimising the potential for distraction as desired by the Regulations and the ancillary PPG.
- 6.5 Subject to the recommended conditions controlling the operation of the proposed advertising display, the proposal to update the existing advertising display on a like for like basis (size, scale, position, elevation, general appearance), would have no material impact upon driver distraction, highway safety, or public safety.