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Development Management
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 0FR

Dear Sir/Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (CONTROL OF ADVERTISEMENTS) (ENGLAND)
REGULATIONS 2007
WATLING STREET, BURBAGE, HICKLEY, LE10 2JQ
INSTALLATION OF DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENT DISPLAY

This cover letter has been prepared on behalf of Rontec Properties Limited, an outdoor media infrastructure provider, and is submitted in support of an application for advertisement consent to erect a single-sided freestanding small format advertisement display at the above site.

The site comprises a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) owned by Rontec, one of the UK's leading forecourt operators in England and Wales. The Company currently operates over 267 service stations under fuel brands such as Esso, BP and Shell offering customers not only fuel but everyday convenience essentials including fresh groceries.

Wildstone Estates Limited is working in partnership with Rontec to modernise existing advertising infrastructure across the Rontec portfolio and where possible to streamline existing advertisements, which aligns with an industry wide programme.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to erect a single-sided small format advertising display which will be visible to users of the PFS and to drivers travelling northbound on Watling Street and 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 small format advertisement display will have the following dimensions: 1.23m(w) x 2.4m(h) x 0.22m (d). The bottom of the display will be located 0.41m above ground level.

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 (**Appendix 1**). 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.

The 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 over time 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.

Guidelines by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) includes a set of model conditions which can be applied to advertisement consents going forwards. 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 within **Appendix 2** of this statement for clarity. Brightness would be 300 cd/sqm from dusk to dawn and up to 5,000 cd/sqm at all other times dependent on time of day/year and ambient conditions, in line with ILP Guidance.

THE SITE

The Site is located wholly within the commercial entity of the PFS and the small format advertisement display will be positioned in the Site’s western corner. The Site is a PFS characterised by a retail unit, amazon lockers, large canopy, petrol pumps on the forecourt and various commercial signage including a double-sided totem-style display (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1



The Site is located along Watling Street and the siting of the new display would be positioned in the western corner of the Site, visible to users as they enter the Site. The Site is bound to the north and the east by a row of trees, behind which are residential dwellings, to the south by woodlands, and to the west by Watling Street and a car park serving a restaurant. The Site is largely contained by mature trees, screening it from view of the residential properties beyond.

The immediate surroundings of the Site are predominantly residential in character, however, there are commercial uses in proximity to the Site. Despite the residential nature of the area, there are no properties that face directly onto the PFS and so the proposed display would not have an impact on nearby residential amenity.

The wider area comprises two public houses, agricultural fields, woodlands, Junction 1 of the M69, and a residential estate. As such, there are business-related signage and advertisements in the area shown in Figures 2, 3, 4 below.

Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



The proposed advert display will be viewed predominately by users of the PFS. With the careful positioning of the display, facing westwards into the PFS forecourt, the display will be viewed wholly within the commercial context of the PFS.

The Site is not within a Conservation Area, nor does it have any historic designations and there are no listed buildings in proximity to the Site. As such, there would be no impact on heritage assets.

In accordance with the categorisations set out in the newly published ILP Guide PLG 05/23, the proposal would be classified as within Environmental Zone 3.

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 (2026, NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The overarching theme of the document is sustainable development and seeks to achieve positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment. There are no policies contained within the NPPF that provide specific guidelines on advertisement proposals. However, Policies PM13(1)(a) (Setting standards), TR6(4) (Assessing transport impacts), DP3(1)+(3) (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF seek to ensure that new development draws upon local characteristics and does not result in a severe adverse impact on highway safety.

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.

The Development Plan for the area is the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2006-2026. Policy DM23 of the Local Plan, ‘High-Quality Shop Fronts and Advertisements’, states that outdoor advertisements which require consent will be approved by the Borough Council where:

- They have no detrimental impact on public safety,

- They do not represent an over proliferation of unnecessary advertisements singularly or cumulatively
- They have no adverse impact on amenity
- They maintain or enhance the character of the conservation area

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed commercial location is appropriate in principle for a small format advertisement display and 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

The Site is a PFS and is a commercial site situated off Watling Street. The Site has been selected as an acceptable location for advertising in principle due to the context of the Site and its surroundings, including commercial signage, road signage and streetlighting in the local area, which establishes the Site as appropriate for an illuminated small format advertising of this type.

The commercial character of PFS, the small scale of the advertisement and the fact that it is located within the confines of the PFS, which includes PFS-related infrastructure (i.e. business signage, canopy, retail kiosk and a totem display), also establishes the Site as appropriate for an illuminated small format advertising of this type. The advertisement would be viewed within the context of the petrol station and its infrastructure (including the scale of the large existing canopy and totem) and, as such, would not appear out of scale with its immediate environment. It would not appear out of place and will sit positively within the surrounding area and the existing character and therefore will have limited impact on any existing views.

In addition, the proposal is to be located in the western corner of the PFS and so would be in keeping with the commercial character of the PFS as it would be visible within the context of other business-related signage and aimed primarily at users of the PFS.

The proposal would not be detrimental in either an immediate or wider sense. Although there are residential properties within proximity to the Site, due to careful positioning of the display facing into the forecourt of the PFS, the display would not be visible to these properties. In addition and considering there is already various existing signage within the existing PFS, the impact on visual amenity would be minimal.

The Site is located within an urban area and in accordance with the categorisations set out in the newly published ILP Guide PLG 05/23, it is recommended that the maximum nighttime luminance of the display should be set at 300cd/m² for Environmental Zone 3. As such brightness would be 300 cd/sqm from dusk to dawn and up to 5,000 cd/sqm at all other times dependent on time of day/year and ambient conditions, in line with ILP Guidance'.

The proposed panel will upgrade and modernise the Site in line with the long-term aspirations to modernise the Rontec PFS estate to meet customer requirements. It will add value to the wider regeneration of the area and will sit comfortably within the existing site and wider surrounding area.

Public Safety

Digital advertising is now a common feature in town centres, local neighbourhood centres and adjacent to major/main roads across the Country. 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.

As the principle of an advertisement is acceptable at this location, the Council must consider whether the proposed controls are sufficient to ensure that there is no additional distraction which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety. 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.

The Site is an uncomplicated location which drivers should be able to navigate with ease. The panel has been positioned to ensure that no driver visibility is blocked for users of the PFS entering or leaving the Site. Watling Street is a straight, single carriageway. The cognitive demand on road users at this point is low as there are no unusual highway complexities which would require extra care to be taken. As such, drivers would be entirely capable of glancing at advertisements whilst maintaining stopping distances and an awareness of surrounding traffic movements. The proposed panel would incorporate illumination levels which align with the ILP's Guidance and this intensity is considered wholly acceptable for the location.

CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks to erect a small format digital advertising panel at the Site which is an appropriate location for advertising in principle and will contribute to the wider modernisation of the sites which sit within the Rontec portfolio. The size and scale of the small format advertisement display is de-minimis in the context of the PFS. PFS sites are an appropriate location in principle for this form of advertising, and the positioning and operational controls have been carefully considered to ensure that the proposed digital advertising display fit in appropriately to the Site and the wider surrounding area and will not have a negligible impact on public safety.

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 visual or residential 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 it should be capable of being granted consent subject to appropriate conditions to control the operation of the advertisement.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

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

- Completed application forms;
- Letter Statement (this letter);
- Highways Safety Report;
- Architectural drawings including:
 - 4602/PA/01 Site Location Plan
 - 4602/PA/02 Existing Site Plan
 - 4602/PA/03 Proposed Site Plan
 - 4602//PA/04 Site Location Plan
 - 4602/PA/05 Existing and Proposed Elevations
 - 4602/PA/06 Specification
 - 4602/PA/07 CGI

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

I 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 in relation to any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



JUSTIN KENWORTHY

Planning Director

STANTEC UK LIMITED