



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2022

By A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J0540/Z/22/3295066

Path To The Front Of Magistrates Court Bridge Street Peterborough PE1 1ED

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by British telecommunication PLC against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/01395/ADV, dated 23 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 January 2022.
 - The proposed development is the Installation of new BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement to both sides of the unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed street hub and advertisement display upon the special interest of the Grade II listed building, 78 Bridge Street, and upon the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The proposed location for the display of advertisement is a pedestrianised section of Bridge Street within the City Conservation Area. From my observations, due to the dominant presence of the Magistrates Court, users of this spacious and relatively tranquil section of street experience less active commercial frontage than is found in other parts of the City Centre, being pleasantly laid out with grouped seating and trees. The proposed hub would be located close to 78 Bridge Street, a Grade II listed building; and by that proximity the proposal would be within the setting wherein that heritage asset is experienced.
4. Although this part of the Conservation Area (and therefore the setting of the listed building) has experienced change, and commercial activity and related shopfronts and signage are apparent, the street has a traditional unhurried feel with public seating and space for the occasional outdoor stall. The significance of the identified heritage assets is their contribution to an awareness of an historic, albeit evolved, public realm.
5. The proposal would result in two large illuminated display screens in a prominent position capable of being seen by users of the immediate area and

from the southern end of Broadway. The appellant stresses the benefit of a proportion of display time being made available for public information, however 95% of display time would be commercial advertising, updated with frequent changes. The dynamic nature of this presentation would contrast with the relatively calm character of this part of the public realm which also contains public art with a contemplative character. The effect of the proposal would be to extend the sense of a 'modern High Street' found to the north of the site into an area where advertisements are not prevalent and commercial activity is less intense.

6. The proposal would insert a modestly-sized but conspicuously uncharacteristic feature in an otherwise tranquil area of the commercial centre of Peterborough. This change would affect the experience of 78 Bridge Street and the character and appearance of part of the City Centre Conservation Area which are both designated heritage assets. I therefore conclude by reference, respectively, to sections 72 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) that the proposed advertising displays would neither preserve or enhance the City Conservation Area, and would harm the significance of the listed building.
7. The appellant suggests that any harm would be less than substantial and I concur; in such circumstances the identified harm is to be weighed against any public benefits, a matter to which I now turn.
8. The hubs seek to improve digital connectivity but it is not claimed that such opportunities can only, or need to, be provided through the hub proposed in this location, merely that the proposal forms part of a wider plan by British Telecom. Further, although the proposal is presented by the appellant as a 'replacement'¹ for existing BT payphone(s), at the time of my visit, no payphones were apparent in proximity to the appeal site. The appellant has not explained this aspect of his case and to my mind the proposed hub would simply appear as an intrusive and incongruous addition to the existing street scene and would not contribute to 'decluttering the street' as is suggested. For this reason little weight can be attached to this part of the appellant case.
9. I note that the appellant refers to a number of appeal decisions, such as Church Street Liverpool and Marmion Road Portsmouth but these do not appear directly comparable due to the circumstances which this decision sets out.
10. Policy LP19 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019) seeks to protect the historic environment, specifically, designated heritage assets and their settings. For the reasons set out before, the proposal would conflict with that policy, being most important for the decision before me, and therefore with the development plan taken as a whole. Overall, the appellant has not persuaded that public benefits would outweigh the harms caused and therefore, having taken all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal cannot succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR

¹ At 2.1 of Appellant's appeal statement; 'replacement hub' would 'replace the 2No. existing phone boxes' and at 3.1 'directly replace an existing payphone' and, at 5.10, 'in a state of disrepair'.