



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 June 2025

by **Paul Martinson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10TH July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/J4423/W/24/3357857

Pavement o/s The University of Sheffield, 13 Brook Hill, Sheffield S3 7HF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02656/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as: 'multifunctional communication Hub including defibrillator and advertisement display'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/J4423/H/24/3357862

Pavement o/s The University of Sheffield, 13 Brook Hill, Sheffield S3 7HF

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02657/HOARD.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as: 'multifunctional communication Hub including defibrillator and advertisement display'.
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Decision

1. *Appeal A*: The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display at Pavement o/s The University of Sheffield, Sheffield S3 7HF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/02656/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawings and documents: Appendix A – A02624 – Application Site Map and Visuals_REVB; Appendix B – Sheffield City Council – Hub Spec; Appendix C – Power of the Public; JCDECAUX UK 2022; Appendix D – Hub Usage 2023; Appendix E – Management Plan; Appendix F – Examples of Community Messaging.
2. *Appeal B*: The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/02657/HOARD, dated 12 September 2024. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations.

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission to erect a multifunctional communication hub (the hub). Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for an advertisement display on the hub. I have considered each appeal on its individual merits, however, as they raise similar issues, I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
4. In respect of Appeal B, the Advertisements Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken into account the policies that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

5. The main issues with regard to Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the effect of the proposal on pedestrian safety.
6. The main issues with regard to Appeal B are the effect of the proposal on the amenity of the area and public safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance/Amenity (Appeals A and B)

7. The appeal site is an area of pavement on a busy stretch of road adjacent to buildings associated with Sheffield University. The footway is wide here for much of the length of road. Whilst I note that the wide pavements are reasonably clear of clutter, there is nonetheless a regular arrangement of street furniture comprising primarily of road signs, traffic lights and lighting columns. In addition, there is a bus shelter and an existing communication hub within the footway to the opposite side of the highway.
8. The proposed hub would have a width of 1.39 metres and would be set in from the edge of the pavement by 1.0 metres. The Council argues that the pavement is free of clutter as a result of the carrying out of the University's Masterplan initiatives which involved removing a bus gate allowing for the widening of the pavement here. The footway and highway in general has a reasonably open character that allows for distant views of university buildings in both directions.
9. However, given the existing width of the pavement here, I am satisfied that the proposal would not take up a significant portion of pavement to the extent that it would become an imposing feature of the streetscene. It would not intrude into views and, given the broadly open character, would not lead to the footway appearing cluttered. To my mind the footway is sufficiently wide here to enable the existing open views along this stretch of road to be maintained. The hub would be seen alongside the existing street furniture and would not appear out of place in this urban setting. Moreover, the hub would reflect the existing communications hub to the opposite side of the road.
10. I acknowledge the work that has been carried out in implementing the University Masterplan and I am in no doubt that this has resulted in improvements to the

streetscene, however, my role is to assess the effect of the proposed development on the area as it exists now.

11. With regard to Appeal A, for the reasons given above, the hub would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Saved Policies BE10, BE13 and CF8 of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP) or Policy CS74 of the Sheffield Core Strategy (2009) (CS). Collectively these policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that the external appearance of new development, including street furniture and advertisements are well-designed and preserve the character and appearance of the streetscene. There would also be compliance with provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires new developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
12. With regard to Appeal B, for the reasons given, the advertisement would not cause harm to the visual amenity of the area. Therefore, insofar as it is material, the proposal would accord with Policies BE10, BE13 and CF8 of the UDP and Policy CS74 of the CS, outlined above. There would also be compliance with the relevant provisions of the Framework, as set out above.

Pedestrian Safety / Public Safety (Appeals A and B)

13. The Council sets out in its reasons for refusal that the proposal would be harmful to the usability of the public realm and would fail to meet the needs of people with disabilities by creating an environment which was not safe and secure. Whilst the Council provides limited detail of this assessment in its officer report, I would note that the hub would only occupy a small portion of the width of the pavement which is relatively wide in this location.
14. My site visit was in the early afternoon on a weekday, and I saw that the footway was well used by pedestrians, reflective of its location between university buildings. The pedestrian crossing to the west of the appeal site was also in regular use by those travelling between the two university sites. Policy BE10 of the UDP states that the Council will require that environmental improvements to streets, pedestrian routes and areas and public spaces should make them convenient and safe to use for people with disabilities and to create attractive, welcoming and usable open areas where people can gather informally. The Framework sets out that development should address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport.
15. Despite the presence of a nearby lighting column, sign, and further west, the traffic lights, I observed that there would be sufficient space surrounding the hub to allow for the free movement and active travel of all pedestrians, including those on foot, or with a mobility, visual or cognitive impairment. Due to the substantial width of the pavement here, the proposed hub would not be a significant obstruction, nor would it notably restrict pedestrian movement, even when in use. This assessment is reinforced by the comments of the Highway Authority who stated that the hub would not cause an obstruction to pedestrians and raised no objections to the proposal.
16. In terms of Appeal A, for the reasons given above, I conclude that there would be no harm to the safety and movement of pedestrians, including those with reduced mobility and disabilities. Consequently, the proposal would comply with the relevant

provisions of Policy BE10, as set out above. There would also be compliance with Policies BE13 and CF8 of the UDP insofar as they relate to matters of pedestrian and highway safety. There would similarly be compliance with the provisions of the Framework, set out above

17. With regard to Appeal B, there would be no harm to public safety. Therefore, insofar as they are material, the proposal would accord with Policies BE10, BE13 and CF8 of the UDP, as set out above.

Other Matters

18. Local Councillors raised concerns at the application stage regarding the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential properties. However, given the extent of separation involved, the scale of the development and the urban setting, I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in undue disturbance to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Their living conditions would therefore be preserved as part of the appeal proposals. I note that the Council concluded similarly with regard to this matter.

Conclusion

19. *Appeal A*: For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.
20. *Appeal B*: For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

Paul Martinson

INSPECTOR