



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 1 July 2025

by **A Wright BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z3635/W/25/3361981

Footpath outside 51 Staines Road West, Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 7AH

- 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 Mr Warner of BT Group Plc against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01395/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as 'installation of 1no. BT street hub unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.'
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Z3635/H/25/3361982

Footpath outside 51 Staines Road West, Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 7AH

- 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 Mr Warner of BT Group Plc against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01396/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as 'installation of 1no. BT street hub unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.'
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. There are two appeals on this site, one against the refusal of planning permission and the other against the refusal of advertisement consent. They are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues. To avoid repetition, while considering each on its merits, I have dealt with both in a single decision letter.
4. In respect of Appeal B, powers under the Regulations to control advertisements may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety.
5. The Council acknowledges that the reasons for refusal for Appeal A and Appeal B mistakenly refer to Staines High Street rather than Staines Road West. As the planning application form and plans clearly refer to Staines Road West, I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

6. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

7. The main issue in respect of Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

8. The appeal site is on a footway adjacent to the A308 Staines Road West. There are mixed commercial and residential properties along The Parade to the north, separated from the site by a small road and footpath. On the opposite side of the A308 is a shopping centre with various large buildings towering above the commercial units. The footways adjacent to Staines Road West include bus stops, road signs, streetlights and bollards, but there is no street furniture alongside the appeal site.
9. The proposed slender profiled street hub would be set back around 0.5m from the road kerb. It would provide electronics communications services with LED digital screens for advertising on each side, the revenue from which would make it commercially viable.
10. The proposal would introduce a new substantial sized structure in a prominent location adjacent to a busy dual carriageway. Whilst the new street hub would be within a commercial area not designated for its heritage value, it would lie some distance from the buildings on The Parade on a wide section of pavement currently free of street signs, furniture and advertisements. Due to its size and freestanding position, the proposed structure and associated advertisement panels would create harmful visual clutter, discordant in the street scene.
11. Street hubs are intended to replace the existing payphone network, and two existing phone boxes adjacent to a shop on The Parade would be removed, decluttering the footpath adjacent to the commercial units. In assessing similar schemes on appeal, Inspectors have compared the visual impacts of proposed street hubs with the phone boxes they would replace. However, in this case, the phone boxes are on a different footway unrelated to the site of the proposed street hub which limits the weight I can attribute to their removal.
12. Consequently, in terms of Appeal A, I conclude that the proposed street hub would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with Policy EN1 of the Council's Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document 2009 (DPD) which requires development to respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene, amongst other things.
13. With regards to Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would harm visual amenity. I have had regard to Policy EN1 of the DPD so far as it is material and, in this respect, the proposal would conflict with this policy.

Other Matters

14. National policies and codes of practice recognise the social and economic benefits of digital connectivity and support high quality telecommunications infrastructure. The proposed street hub would provide several benefits to the local community, including providing free ultrafast public wi-fi, improved 4G and 5G coverage, public service information, rapid device charging, free phone calls, environmental sensors, and use for advertising by the Council and local businesses. It would be powered by renewable energy and regularly cleaned and monitored. Nevertheless,

these benefits would not outweigh the harm caused to character, appearance and visual amenity.

15. At the time of the application, the Council and the County Highway Authority raised no objections to the proposal on highway or public safety grounds.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

A Wright

INSPECTOR