



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 July 2025

by **L Gardner MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th July 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3357636

21 Centrale Shopping Centre, Unit 1 - 2 North End, Croydon CR0 1TY

- 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 Nathan Still of In Focus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 24/03226/FUL.
 - The development proposed is installation of a modern, multifunction hub unit featuring an integral advertisement display and defibrillator.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/L5240/H/24/3357637

21 Centrale Shopping Centre, Unit 1 - 2 North End, Croydon CR0 1TY

- 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 Nathan Still of In Focus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 24/03227/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is display of a single sided illuminated 6 sheet advertisement affixed to a telecommunication hub unit.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of a modern, multifunction hub unit featuring an integral advertisement display and defibrillator at 21 Centrale Shopping Centre, Unit 1 - 2 North End, Croydon CR0 1TY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/03226/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule 1.
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of a single sided illuminated 6 sheet advertisement affixed to a telecommunication hub unit at 21 Centrale Shopping Centre, Unit 1 - 2 North End, Croydon CR0 1TY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/03227/ADV, dated 19 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 and the additional conditions in the attached Schedule 2.

Preliminary Matters

3. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed multifunction hub. Appeal B is in respect to the refusal of an associated advertisement consent which would be an integral part of the proposed hub sought under Appeal A. I have considered both on their individual merits, but as they raise similar issues, I have combined these cases into a single decision letter.

4. In respect to Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. With respect to Appeal B, the development plan policies referred to by the Council are not determinative, but I have taken these into account as a material consideration.
5. In Appeal B, I have taken the description of the proposed advertisement from the appeal form rather than the application form as this is a more accurate description.
6. The appellant's statement refers to the replacement of an existing telephone call box on North End. However, I note that this is not referred to within the description of development or included within the red line site location plan. It therefore does not appear to fall within the development before me and I have not considered it further.

Main Issues

7. The main issues in relation to Appeal A are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and the significance of the nearby Central Croydon Conservation Area (CCCA), a designated heritage asset, through development within its setting, and
 - highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrian and cycle movement and vehicular access.
8. The main issues in relation to Appeal B are the effect of the proposed advertisement on:
 - visual amenity and,
 - public safety, with particular regard to pedestrian and cycle movement and vehicular access.

Reasons

Character and appearance and visual amenity

9. The appeal site is close to, albeit outside of, the boundary of the CCCA. The significance of the CCCA is partially derived from its urban street layout, which is largely medieval in origin. It forms part of the commercial and civic centre for Croydon with North End being the principal shopping street, formed as a result of the late Victorian commercial expansion of the town centre. Despite the impact of large 20th Century shopping centres, the area retains much of its historic fabric and plan form, representing many historic phases of Croydon's economic and commercial development.
10. At the point of the appeal site, North End is pedestrianised being paved between building frontages. The side of the street which is within the CCCA contains a diverse range of architectural styles above ground floor commercial units. Outside of the CCCA, buildings are of a similar scale but modern form. There is an attractive avenue of tall trees which run broadly centrally down the pedestrianised route. Street furniture is frequent in the area including benches, bins, navigational

posts and streetlamps. The majority of the street furniture is positioned alongside the trees creating an attractive space for users to pause or linger between shopping. The width of the pedestrianised paving allows the existing structures to be accommodated within the street scene without appearing as a proliferation.

11. Signage and advertising are also frequent within the pedestrianised area, both within and outside of the CCCA. I also observed illuminated advertisement displays within shop units which have established the presence of powered display screens in the street and in the setting of the CCCA.
12. The proposed hub would be positioned at a prominent position within the footway, offset from the avenue of trees where the majority of existing street furniture is clustered. Nevertheless, it would be broadly in line with existing streetlamps and so an additional piece of street furniture in this location would not be an alien feature which would cause an intrusive addition. Given the broad width of the footway, and the existing tall trees which form a dominating feature of the street scene, the proposed hub would appear subservient to both the buildings which surround it, as well as the street environment within which it would be interpreted.
13. The proposed hub would not disrupt the historic fabric or plan form of the CCCA. It would instead assimilate well with the modern ground floor shop units (and their associated advertisements) which have already established a presence within the setting of the CCCA. Although the proposed advertisement would create additional illumination, this could be controlled in extent through condition. Given the already bustling and commercial nature of the location, I have identified no harm to visual amenity from the size and nature of the advertisement display proposed.
14. I note that the appellant is also in the process of appealing three other similar decisions for hub units, again linked with an associated advertisement consent, also in central Croydon¹. However, given the substantial distance between the appeal site and each of the other appeal proposals, the appeal proposal before me would not be read in the same visual context and therefore I have identified no harm arising from a potential cumulative impact.
15. Based on the above I conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area and visual amenity, including in the context of the significance of the CCCA with regard to its setting. The proposal would therefore preserve the setting of the adjacent heritage asset in line with Policy DM18 of the Croydon Local Plan (CLP) (2018).
16. The proposal would also comply with Policy SP4 of the CLP which in part, requires proposals to respect the public realm including in the context of integrating with the historic environment. It would comply with Policy DM10 of the CLP which amongst other matters outlines that development should create a high quality built environment which is stimulating. The proposal would also comply with Policies D4 D8 of the London Plan (LP) (2021) which amongst other things, relate to achieving high quality design and require that the public realm is well-designed, and that consideration is given to the location of street furniture to complement the use and function of the space.

¹ 93 George Street - APP/L5240/W/24/3357629 linked with APP/L5240/H/24/3357631; 99 George Street - APP/L5240/W/24/3357632 linked with APP/L5240/H/24/3357633; and 11-12 Suffolk House – APP/L5240/W/24/3357634 linked with APP/L5240/H/24/3357635.

17. There would also be no conflict with the provisions of paragraph 141 of the Framework, specifically in relation to amenity. The relevance of Policy T2 of the LP is limited in relation to this main issue, given that as below it relates more generally to healthy streets.

Highway and public safety

18. Policy T4 of the LP states that development proposals should not increase road danger. Policy T2 of the LP relates to the delivery of healthy streets including in the context of developments being permeable for pedestrians and cyclists. Policy SP8 of the CLP amongst other matters, states that the Council will improve conditions for walking and enhance the pedestrian experience partially through avoiding unnecessary footway interruptions. Policy DM29 of the CLP states that development must not have a detrimental impact on highway safety, including for pedestrians and cyclists.
19. The pedestrianised footway which the appeal site forms part of is a significant width. Pedestrians, including those with visual impairments, and cyclists would therefore be able to easily deviate and navigate around the proposed hub even in the context of busy footfalls. Whilst the proposal may form a minor obstruction to emergency and service vehicles, there would still remain space either side of the structure for the efficient movement of these vehicles. Noting the pedestrianised context of the site, any vehicles would need to proceed with caution in any case and would already likely be avoiding the appeal site given the path of the nearby streetlamps.
20. Based on the above, the proposal would have an acceptable effect on highway and public safety, with particular regard to pedestrian and cycle movement and vehicular access. It would therefore comply with Policies T2 and T4 of the LP as well as Policies SP8 and DM29 of the CLP. There would also be no conflict with the provisions of paragraph 141 of the Framework, specifically in relation to public safety.

Conditions

21. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council and the appellant, having regard to the six tests set out in paragraph 57 of the Framework. Where necessary I have amended the wording in the interests of precision and enforceability.
22. In respect to Appeal A I have imposed a condition listing the approved drawings in the interests of clarity in addition to the standard time condition. The hub specification details include details and finish of the proposed external materials and therefore I do not consider it necessary to seek further details of these. However, in the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area, I have imposed a condition requiring compliance with these materials. Conditions suggested by the Council in relation to the display of the advertisement are not relevant or necessary to be imposed with Appeal A.
23. In relation to Appeal B, in addition to the five standard conditions set out within Schedule 2 of the Regulations, it is necessary to control the illumination of the advertisement in the interests of visual amenity and to prevent the advertisement standing out significantly from the background illumination of the street, particularly during hours of darkness. With this condition imposed, I do not consider it would

be necessary to require that the advertisement is switched off during the night. I have however found it necessary to impose conditions to control the minimum display time for each advertisement and to prevent visual effects, so that visual intrusion and undue distraction to pedestrians and cyclists does not occur.

24. A condition securing compliance with the plans for Appeal B as suggested by the Council is not necessary because the decision grants express consent rather than planning permission. The imposition of this condition is ordinarily to facilitate applications for minor material amendments which would not be relevant to an express consent.
25. For both appeals, the Council has suggested a condition requiring management of the unit in accordance with the submitted management plan. This would be in the interests of minimising anti-social behaviour, in line with the consultee response from Metropolitan Police. They have also requested that free calls from the hub shall be disabled for the first three months. However, having reviewed the management plan document, I am satisfied that this would provide adequate means to mitigate against anti-social behaviour (including call blocking for frequent calls from any one hub to the same number). The further disablement of calls from the hub for three months would therefore not be reasonable.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be allowed, subject to the conditions set out in my formal decisions.

L Gardner

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULES OF CONDITIONS

SCHEDULE 1 - Appeal A Ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3357636

- 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 drawing nos A/489467/05 Rev. B, "Site Plan & Images" – A02587, "Hub Unit Specification Appendix A" and "Pavement Reinstatement Appendix F".
- 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown within the document "Hub Unit Specification Appendix A".
- 4) The development hereby permitted shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the document "Communication Hub Unit Management Plan" V4 June 2023, for the lifetime of the development.

SCHEDULE 2 - Appeal B Ref: APP/L5240/H/24/3357637

- 1) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisement permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/m² between dusk and dawn, consistent with guidance set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals publication Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (PLG05, 2023) (or its equivalent in a replacement guide).
- 2) The minimum display time for each advertisement shall be 10 seconds. There shall be no special effects that include noise, smell, flashing, or smoke. Full-motion video is not permitted.
- 3) The interval between successive displays shall be instantaneous and the complete display screen shall change without visual effects (including fading, swiping or other animated transition methods) between each advertisement.
- 4) The consent hereby granted shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the document "Communication Hub Unit Management Plan" V4 June 2023, for the lifetime of the consent.

END OF SCHEDULES OF CONDITIONS