
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 July 2025

by **R Lawrence BSc (Hons), PGDip (TP), MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 August 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q3630/W/24/3357616

Land outside 14 Station Parade, Virginia Water GU25 4AB

- 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 New World Payphones against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RU.24/1235.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1 no. new communications kiosk with integrated advertising display.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Q3630/H/24/3357617

Land outside 14 Station Parade, Virginia Water, Runnymede, GU25 4AB

- 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 New World Payphones against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RU.24/1228.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1 no. new communications kiosk with integrated advertising display.
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Decision

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The two appeals before me relate to the refusal of planning permission for the communications kiosk (appeal A), and the refusal of advertisement consent for the integrated advertising display (appeal B). Although I have considered each proposal on its individual merits, the reason for refusal in both cases is essentially the same. Accordingly, I have addressed both appeals together under this common issue within a single decision letter.
3. In relation to appeal B, Regulation 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 states that a Local Planning Authority shall exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.
4. The proposed kiosk would be freestanding and would include a defibrillator, interactive information display, telephone equipment and a digital advertisement display.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrian flow.

Reasons

6. The Council's reason for refusal centres primarily on concerns regarding the width of the pavement, particularly the extent of it designated as public highway. There are no definitive plans or other conclusive evidence before me that clearly delineate the boundary between the public highway and land in private ownership. However, the Council's submissions indicate that a maximum of 1.3 metres of public footway would remain. This falls short of the minimum recommended width of 2.0 metres—or 1.5 metres where constraints exist—as set out in Department for Transport guidance.
7. The proposed kiosk would be centrally located along a parade of shops, in close proximity to a post box and a lamp post. This stretch of pavement lies adjacent to a large retail parade, landscaped public gardens, a substantial public car park, and further along, the main railway station. To the rear of the shops are other uses including retirement flats and a British Legion branch and club. It is, therefore, a well-used and active location, and during my site visit I observed a steady flow of pedestrian traffic.
8. At the time of my visit, the proposed location was particularly busy. The presence of street collectors and ongoing highway works at the kerb—resulting in a partial closure of the footway—exacerbated the situation, creating a noticeable pinch point and significantly impeding pedestrian movement along this section of pavement.
9. While I acknowledge that the presence of both the street collectors and the highway works were temporary in nature, their presence served to illustrate the impact that even modest obstructions can have on pedestrian flow in this location. In this context, the potential reduction in usable pavement width—particularly if part of the land is in private ownership—is a material concern. There is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that any privately owned portion of the pavement would remain accessible and usable by the public in the long term.
10. Given the uncertainty over the extent of usable pavement width moving forwards, I conclude that the proposed kiosk would have a detrimental effect on highway safety, with particular regard to pedestrian flow. The proposal would therefore conflict with policy SD4 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and LTP4 of the SCC Local Transport Plan (2022). These policies, taken together and insofar as relevant, require development to prioritise walking, provide safe and suitable access for all users including pedestrians and those with disabilities and to promote street environments that support health, wellbeing, and active lifestyles. The proposal would also conflict with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework which include avoiding unnecessary street clutter and prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements.

Other Matters

11. In addition to the main issue identified above, I have had regard to the other concerns raised by interested parties, including matters relating to health and safety, potential social and psychological impacts, and the visual effect of the kiosk

in contributing to street clutter. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, it is not necessary for me to consider these matters in further detail.

Planning Balance (appeal A)

12. In respect of Appeal A, paragraph 119 of the Framework states that an advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. The Framework also supports the expansion of electronic communication networks. In this context, the proposed hub would align with the Government's objective of improving digital infrastructure.
13. The proposal would enhance communication provision, including the capacity to display Council and other public service messages, and would enable users to access a range of communication technologies.
14. The proposal also includes the installation of a defibrillator. While the Council has noted the presence of existing defibrillators within the parade of shops and at nearby locations—in addition to one I observed at the railway station—I do not consider this to diminish the public health benefits associated with increasing their availability.
15. Furthermore, the integrated advertisement display would be made available to local businesses and enterprises at a discounted rate, potentially contributing to the vitality and viability of the local area. It could also be used for Council messaging and emergency alerts.
16. Taken together, these are notable and appreciable public benefits to which I attach considerable weight. However, I do not consider that these benefits are sufficient to outweigh the harm identified in relation to pedestrian safety.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, Appeal A is dismissed.
18. In respect of appeal B, for the reasons given above, the proposal would be detrimental to public safety. Appeal B is therefore also dismissed.

R Lawrence

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/Q3630/W/24/3357616	New World Payphones
Appeal B	APP/Q3630/H/24/3357617	New World Payphones