
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 14 July 2025

by **C Harding BA (Hons) PGCert PGDip MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 August 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3362834

Footpath at 156 Cross Street, Sale M33 7AQ

- 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 Simon Warner on behalf of BT Group PLC against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 115209/FUL/24.
 - The development proposed is 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/Q4245/H/25/3362836

Footpath at 156 Cross Street, Sale, M33 7AQ

- 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 Simon Warner on behalf of BT Group PLC against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 115210/ADV/24.
 - The development proposed is Installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of unit.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed communication hub. Appeal B relates to the refusal of advertisement consent for the digital signage which would be an integral part of the hub proposed in Appeal A. I have combined the appeals into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues, however I have considered each on its individual merits.
3. In relation to Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 stipulate that control may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst the development plan policies referred to by the Council are not determinative, I have taken them into account where relevant.

Main Issues

4. In relation to Appeal A the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

5. In relation to Appeal B the main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site relates to an area of footway alongside a busy and wide road. The footway effectively forms an elongated island between the road and an access and parking area serving buildings which address but are set-back from the road itself. This area of footway is reasonably wide and accommodates street lighting columns, a mature tree and an existing digital advertisement hub.
7. The area is generally commercial in character, with a mix of modern and older buildings, some of a domestic scale. As a result, there are existing advertisements in the area, however, the width of footways and the adjacent road, and scale of buildings afford the area an open aspect which is complimented by the relative lack of street furniture generally found in the area, given its urban location.
8. The proposed hub would be of substantial height and of notable width, resulting in a boxlike structure. Its size, form and orientation would lead to it appearing as an imposing and prominent feature within the street. Moreover, its location close to an existing digital advertisement hub would lead to an unexpected proliferation of such development in a streetscene where advertising structures are generally well spaced or associated with specific buildings.
9. The commercial character of the area means that advertisements and illuminated signage are not uncommon. However, when seen in the context of the existing digital hub, the cumulative effect means that the proposed digital advertising would be prominent and intrusive. Although the brightness of the screen could be controlled, the advertisement would remain particularly noticeable and harmful.
10. It is stated that the proposal would lead to the removal of an existing phone box, which is some distance from the appeal site, and located to the rear of the footway of a subsidiary road. The existing structure is therefore not prominent within the wider streetscene, and while there would be some benefit to its removal, its position and nature are not wholly comparable to the proposed hub and its location. Moreover, it has not been shown that the removal of the existing kiosk is predicated on the installation of the proposal, nor have I been presented with any mechanism to ensure its removal in any event. As a result, this limits the weight that I can afford to this factor.
11. In view of the above, I conclude that in respect of Appeal A, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. In relation to Appeal B, my reasoning applies equally to the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity. As a result in relation to Appeal B, the proposal would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on amenity.
12. Consequently, both Appeal A and Appeal B would conflict with Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) where it requires, among other things, that development respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used and incorporates quality public realm.

Other Matters

13. I have had regard to the excerpts from other Inspector decisions¹ within the evidence, however these examples appear to be located in other settlements and are likely to have taken account of site specific circumstances. Therefore, they are not wholly comparable to the case which is now before me, and my decision is based upon the particular characteristics of this locality.
14. With regard to Appeal B, the Council has not suggested the proposal would affect public safety and I have no reason to disagree.

Balance and Conclusion

15. Paragraph 119 of the Framework indicates that an advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. The Framework also seeks to support the expansion of electronic communications networks.
16. The proposed hub would be solar powered and would incorporate a means of contacting the emergency services, along with access to public Wi-Fi, device charging and environmental sensors. There is also potential for the proposed interactive screen to be made available to the Council and emergency services for public service messaging. It is also stated that the hub could also provide additional 4G and 5G coverage in the future if required by operators.
17. While these would all be benefits of the proposal, it has not been shown that they could not be otherwise delivered either in an alternative form or alternative location, and in the case of 4G and 5G provision, there is no certainty that this would be delivered at all.
18. In the case of Appeal B, even if the structure upon which the advertisements would be mounted were to have wider public benefits in terms of improving electronic communications, this is not a matter to which I can afford weight in the context of the advertisement regulations. Equally, although the advertisements could contain public awareness messaging, the specific content of the advertisements is not a matter that falls within the scope of this appeal.
19. For the reasons given above, the proposals subject to Appeal A and Appeal B would harm the character and appearance and amenity of the area, and in the case of Appeal A, would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Whilst the proposals would offer public benefits, these would not outweigh the harms identified. Accordingly, I conclude that both Appeals A and B should be dismissed.

C Harding

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/Z5630/H/18/3209488 and APP/N5660/Z/22/3295689