



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 12 August 2025

by **K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th August 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3364466

Pavement outside 45 Division Street, Sheffield S1 4GE

- 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 (Infocus Public Networks Limited) against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application reference is 25/00055/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/J4423/H/25/3364469

Pavement outside 45 Division Street, Sheffield S1 4GE

- 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 (Infocus Public Networks Limited) against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application reference is 25/00056/HOARD.
 - The advertisement proposed is an LCD portrait screen showing static and illuminated content within a multifunctional communication hub unit.
-

Decisions

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. As set out below, the appeals have different main issues. This stems from the stipulation in the Advertisement Regulations that applications be considered solely in terms of the effects on amenity and highway safety. In practice, the issues in both appeals are related to the visual impact of the proposal, and thus my reasoning below relates to both appeals, unless otherwise specified.

Main Issues

3. The main issue in Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area (CCCA).
4. The main issue in Appeal B is the effect on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within the CCCA, which encompasses a large area of the historic centre of Sheffield with busy commercial streets that include a mix of traditional and modern buildings, interspersed by notable public buildings including St Peter and St Paul's Cathedral, St Mary's Cathedral, Sheffield City and Town Halls and the Crucible and Lyceum Theatres. This rich mix of built form is

demonstrative of the city's long and continuing evolution as a centre of trade and culture, and it is from this that the CCCA draws its significance.

6. The proposed unit is a steel framed, rectangular structure with clear polycarbonate and toughened glass panels. It would stand 2630mm high, 1338mm wide and 317mm deep, with a projecting overhead panel of 600mm depth on one side. The defibrillator equipment and digital interface would be located on a central panel to one side of the unit, with the other side containing a digital advertisement display.
7. The proposal would be located on a broad section of the footway at the corner of Division Street and Rockingham Lane. Division Street contains bars, restaurants and shops and is a source of constant activity throughout the day. This busy nature is reflected in the street layout, with broad footways on both sides to accommodate high pedestrian traffic. Street furniture in the immediate vicinity is to a minimum, with bollards to the inner part of the street and a limited number of slender poles and a bicycle stand to the outer edge. The narrow form of these items maximises the space for pedestrians and maintains a clean, open aspect to the street. This is also reflected in the subtle design of fascia signage on buildings and an absence of large and illuminated advertisements within the public realm.
8. In this context, the proposed unit would represent an anomalous development. It would stand to the outer edge of the footway and in the middle of a junction, beyond the existing line of street furniture, where it would appear highly prominent and interruptive of the open, uncluttered streetscape. Its size and utilitarian design would detract from the overall quality of the public realm where street furniture has been kept to a minimum both in form and number. Moreover, the advertisement would be particularly strident in an environment absent similar installations, especially during hours of darkness, due to its digital means of illumination and changing pattern of images. Due to the openness and straight alignment of Division Street, the unit and advertisement would appear prominently in longer distance views along the street, including the unit forming an intrusive presence in the view towards Barker's Pool and the clock tower of the Town Hall.
9. Consequently, in Appeal A, I conclude that the proposed unit would undermine the high quality of the streetscape and so would harm the character and appearance of the CCCA. So far as they are relevant as material considerations, there would be conflict with the aims of Policy CS74 of the Sheffield Core Strategy 2009 (the SCS) and saved Policies S10, BE5, BE10, BE13 and BE16 of the Unitary Development Plan 1998 (the UDP) which together require high quality development that respects the townscape and heritage of the city; is appropriate in scale and nature to the site; creates attractive, welcoming and usable open areas; co-ordinates street furniture and which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
10. For the reasons set out, the advertisement under Appeal B would harm the visual amenity of the area. Again, so far as relevant, there would conflict with saved Policy BE13 of the UDP which permits illuminated advertisements only where they do not harm the character and appearance of the area. In both appeals, there would be further conflict with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve high quality design in all development, including advertisements.
11. In respect of Appeal A, the proposal would affect a small part of the CCCA, and thus the harm to its heritage significance would be at the lower end of less than

substantial, having regard to the language of the Framework. Nonetheless, the Framework directs that great weight should be attributed to less than substantial harm, which should be weighed against any public benefits which would arise from the development.

12. The appellant advances the benefits to the public of having an additional defibrillator available for use in emergencies. The evidence before me indicates that there are some 10 defibrillators within a 170m radius of the appeal site, of which 4 are understood to be accessible 24 hours a day. I am not advised of any requirement for defibrillators to be installed either in specific locations or at a specific density across an area. It would nonetheless be a positive step for the health of the community to add another defibrillator in a visible, public location such as that proposed, but this would be a benefit of limited weight in light of the number of existing defibrillators in the immediate area.
13. Other benefits advanced include a free phone, emergency service call button, USB charger, a wayfinder screen and the advertisement being capable of showing community messages alongside commercial advertisements. I am mindful of the Framework's support for the development of high quality communications infrastructure for economic growth and social well-being. However, while the phone, call button, USB and wayfinding functions would provide benefit to some in certain situations, they would have limited utility to the wider public given the ubiquitous availability of mobile phones and increasing number of charging facilities in public buildings and businesses. There is also an existing wayfinding totem on the opposite side of the street a short distance away. The display of community messages would be a benefit, but I have no evidence that the appeal site is the only feasible location where such a display could be installed, nor have I any details as to the intended frequency of such messaging relative to commercial displays. As such, I afford limited weight to the benefit of displaying community messages on the proposed unit. I find similarly in respect of the CCTV and air quality sensors proposed within the unit, which could be installed discreetly in other locations without the need for the proposed unit.
14. Overall, in respect of Appeal A, the benefits of the proposed unit would not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the CCCA. Nor would the display of community messages outweigh the harm to visual amenity identified under Appeal B.

Other Matter

15. The Council did not raise objection in terms of the effect of the unit or the advertisement on public safety. I have seen no evidence to reach a different view; however, an absence of harm in this respect does not outweigh my findings above.

Conclusion

16. Therefore, for the reasons given above, both appeals should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR