
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 12 August 2025 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/T0355/W/25/3364020

Pavement o/s 116 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1PT

- 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 BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 24/02825.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub unit and removal of 2no. associated BT payphone kiosks from the streetscene.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/T0355/Z/25/3364021

Pavement o/s 116 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1PT

- 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 BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 24/02826.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub unit and removal of 2no. associated BT payphone kiosks from the streetscene.
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Decision

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

3. The appellant has submitted a heritage statement which the Council allude to on the decision notice. In all that's reasonable, this would have been the only way to respond to that point. I have taken it from the Council that they object to the schemes on these grounds in any case. I do not feel that any main party would be prejudiced by my acceptance of the statement. I have proceeded on this basis.
4. Appeal A relates to planning permission for the hub and appeal B advertisement consent thereon. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with the two schemes together since the main issue is intertwined. For appeal B, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 sets out the relevant considerations for this type of appeal. These are amenity and public safety. The Council do not object to the latter, and I have no reason to disagree. With this and

the above in mind, the main issue is the effect of the hub on the character and appearance of the area with specific regard to the Maidenhead Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) and a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). This translates to the effect of the advertisement element on visual amenity for the purposes of the aforementioned regulations.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal scheme would replace an existing telephone box. The wider area is a town centre high street with commercial units on the ground floor and what appears other commercial and residential uses on the upper floors. Instances of street furniture in the local vicinity are minimal, well-spaced and to the side of the pavement. Advertisements are relatively modest and consistent in their scale with limited levels of illumination.
6. The CA comprises a town centre within which reside a number of high-quality examples of period architecture. It is eclectic in this respect and there is a varied street scene, but it is heavily influenced by traditional and noticeably decorative detailing and materials despite some more modern altered ground floor shop fronts. These include striking Victorian and Edwardian facades, decorative brick and stonework as well as scrolling to some column detailing.
7. The appeal site itself sits immediately outside of the front of the Old Post Office. This is a substantial building rich in period detail as well as high quality brick and stone. These materials feature in a strong and flush brick frontage punctuated by an even and repeated rhythm of vertical sliding sash windows inset with some curved brickwork as well as stone headers, cills and surrounds. It's architectural quality, originality and its complete three storey height and frontage span give the building an imposing presence in the street scene, contributing positively to both its significance as a Non Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) and the eclectic mix and high quality period and traditional architectural elements of the CA.
8. The appeal proposal would replace existing telecommunications infrastructure and therefore would not increase the amount of street clutter. However, its centralised position would highlight its incompatibility with the historic elements of the street scene. Notwithstanding that it needs to be a certain height to house the antennas, the overall scale of the hub would be obtrusive and distracting to the obvious architectural qualities of the NDHA. The illumination of the signage would, due to the surface area of the screen element and the nature of the lighting, be equally distracting and increase the obviousness of the installation, countering the more respectful modesty and consistency of other local methods of illuminated advertising. The combination of these incongruous features would impact negatively on the overall attractiveness and quality of the street, NDHA and by association the CA's historic traditionality.
9. The presence of a previous telephone box does not automatically result in the acceptability of a street hub due to their different features. I appreciate that the appellant has also provided details of a number of appeal decisions on similar hubs in alternative locations. However, I have no further details on their design or wider context along with policy and prevailing guidance at the time they were considered. I therefore can only draw limited information from these appeals and as such my findings would not change.

10. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing. Nationally speaking, paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) places emphasis on great weight being given to an asset's conservation. Given the above assessment, and in regard to appeal A, the proposals would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Due to the scale of the development in context, the harm is less than substantial. Taking into account the above, it would be at the upper end thereof. As directed by paragraph 215 of the Framework, and in terms of Appeal A, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
11. The hub would provide free Wi-Fi along with a significant number of services including free calls. However, these benefits are relatively limited and only when in the close proximity of the hub. I am not sufficiently convinced that this hub would acceptably combat any anti-social behaviour issues even with a management plan in place. It is unclear that it is solely the boxes that were the cause or necessarily the attraction. The focus may be to remove dilapidated telephone boxes. It is unclear though why this means the hubs have to be in the same place or immediate vicinity given their functionality and why one is necessarily dependent on the other. I would therefore give the public benefits only limited weight.
12. It is sufficiently clear, given the above, that the public benefits would not outweigh the great weight given to conservation of the designated heritage asset and the level of visual impingement specifically on the NDHA for the reasons I have set out. In terms of Appeal A, the scheme would therefore conflict with Policies HE1, QP1 and QP3 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Local Plan 2023 (LP) which seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard along with preserving the historic environment. In terms of Appeal B, the advertisement signage taken as a whole would be unacceptable in amenity terms and would not comply with the 2007 regulations. This would not sit appropriate with the aims of the aforementioned policies of the LP albeit they have not been decisive given the scope of the 2007 regulations in relation thereto.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above, appeal A would not comply with the development plan, and I have been given no compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate therefrom. Appeal B would, for the same reasons, fail an assessment under the above-mentioned regulations. I therefore recommend that both appeals should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR