



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by **K Williams MTCP (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/U4230/W/25/3365859

Footpath outside 100 Church St, Eccles, Manchester M30 0LH

- 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 Group PLC against the decision of Salford City Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2025/0089.
 - The development proposed is Installation of New BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement panels to both sides of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/U4230/H/25/3365861

Footpath outside 100 Church St, Eccles, Manchester M30 0LH

- 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 Group PLC against the decision of Salford City Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2025/0136.
 - The advertisement proposed is the Installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit
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Decision

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

Preliminary Matters

2. There are two appeals on this site, one against the refusal of planning permission and the other against the refusal of advertisement consent. They are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues. To avoid repetition, while considering each on its merits, I have dealt with both in a single decision letter.
3. For Appeal B, in the banner heading above, I have used the description of the proposal as set out on the application form for consent to display an advertisement. This is different from the description provided on the appeal form, but it is more succinct and there is no evidence a change was agreed.
4. The Council has referred to historic buildings close to the appeal site. During the appeal, further details have been submitted to clarify the locally listed buildings and listed buildings. The main locally listed buildings referred to include 89 Church Street, Eccles Town Hall and 116 Church Street. The Grade II listed buildings referred to are the Eccles Central Library¹ and the Eccles War Memorial². Notwithstanding that harm to listed buildings or their settings did not form part of the Council's reason for refusal, in respect of Appeal A section 66(1) of the

¹ List Entry Number: 1162833

² List Entry Number: 1067499

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), places a statutory duty on decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

5. In respect of Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) make it clear that advertisements are subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest. Whilst not decisive, I have taken relevant development plan policies into account as a material consideration.

Main Issue

6. The main issues for Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the effect on the setting of heritage assets. For Appeal B, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement upon amenity.

Reasons (Appeals A and B)

7. The appeal site in Eccles town centre is located on Church Street, a main road, where it joins a pedestrianised area called Southway. Buildings are occupied by a variety of town centre uses. The proposal comprises a solid free standing digital street hub approximately 1.2m wide and 2.9m high. The hub would be located in place of two phone kiosks, one of which had already been removed.
8. The town centre area also includes many designated and non-designated heritage assets. The Grade II listed Eccles library comprises fine architectural features. Its age, evolution and history also form part of special interest and significance. The special interest and significance of the Grade II listed Eccles war memorial is derived from its historic and communal interest. Both of these have visual prominence, visible from connecting roads and distance vantage points, and visible from the appeal site.
9. The significance and special interest of the locally listed No 116 Church Street, the Town Hall and No 89 is derived from their architectural quality, historical uses and their grouping. These are prominent buildings, constructed of similar materials and displaying ornate external features and detailing. They are also seen in views with the Grade II listed Eccles library and war memorial. The proposal would primarily be within the setting of these locally listed buildings. However, it would also be seen in the context of distance views of the listed buildings when looking from the east of the appeal site down Church Street.
10. As well as the traditional buildings and shops within the town centre the immediate public realm is proliferated by other street furniture. This includes street lights, a large and tall open triangular Eccles centre sign, wayfinding signs, bollards, litter bins, road signs and traffic lights. Advertisements were also present on the town centre shops, building fascia's and street lights. These were low key advertisements, but there was also a multifunctional hub presenting a digital advertisement and integral defibrillator nearby on Church Street, and a high business sign on a tall concrete structure.

11. However, despite the grandeur of the above heritage assets these have a relatively compact form. The relatively diminutive scale of more modern buildings, distinctive street lighting and the expanse of Church Street together with the heritage assets result in a positive spacious environment and distinctive traditional sense of place, despite some later detractors and extent of street furniture.
12. I acknowledge that two large phone kiosks would be removed. The submitted plans show the kiosks were positioned together, with their longer combined elevation running parallel to Church Street. Although the hub would be narrower in depth than the kiosks, it would be wider and would encroach further into the east/west corridor of the footway on Church Street. Whilst it would be lower than the Eccles centre sign, its height would exceed that of the kiosks it would replace.
13. The minor infringement on physical footpath width space, and benefit of opening space up and down Southway would be negated by the tall height of the proposal. There would be an accumulation of tall bulky and solid modern infrastructure, which would be particularly dominating for the immediate space and scale of surroundings. The benefits purported from removal of phone kiosks and uncluttering the street scene would not be fully realised.
14. Furthermore, the setting of the group of buildings at 116 and 89 Church Street and the Town Hall, include the wide street which allows views of many of them to be experienced without any significant visual modern interruptions. The proposals would prominently present the advertisements towards approaching traffic in both directions and be seen in views towards the above heritage assets. There would be added visual prominence with the bright advertisement display. The proposal would introduce a large modern and conspicuous form of development, which would visually compete with the more traditional character of the area within which the assets are experienced, and would draw the eye towards the proposal. Although the area has digital advertisements, the proposal would also lead to two being very close to each other. This combination would have a further dominating and contemporary effect at odds with the gentle traditional character of the immediate area.
15. Due to the above, I conclude the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the non-designated heritage assets. There would be a low level of harm to their significance. As these buildings are seen within the setting of the listed buildings, it follows that there would also be harm to the setting of the Eccles library and war memorial. The amount of harm arising would be less than substantial at the lowest end of the scale. However, great weight should be given to this in respect of designated heritage assets.
16. Paragraph 215 of the Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I have also had regard to paragraph 216 of the Framework which sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In this respect, a balanced judgement will be required to have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
17. The proposal seeks to provide free electronic communications services, which would be funded by advertising revenue generated from the use of the digital

screens. It is contended that this would be used to contribute to meeting demand for digital connectivity and services, such as free ultra-fast Wi-Fi, increased 4G and 5G mobile coverage. It would provide free advertisement for the Council and potentially could display social and community messages and links to emergency services and help to address 'digital divide' providing free Wi-Fi and calls. It could provide environmental, traffic and other monitoring. Although the full extent of these benefits has not been explained in relation to this site, the proposal would provide clear public benefits. These benefits would align with parts of Policy DG1 of the Salford Local Plan Development Management Policies and Designations, adopted January 2023 (the Local Plan) where it seeks to enhance the digital infrastructure of Salford.

18. Conditions could be imposed to ensure the removal of kiosks, intensity of illumination, content, duration and frequency of displays. The proposal would be regularly maintained. The appellant has measures in place to address anti-social behaviours. I note concerns from interested parties, but there is no substantive evidence the proposal would harm nearby occupiers of residential properties, highway safety or impede pedestrian access even for those who are less mobile. However these aspects do not weigh for or against the proposal.
19. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications, the extent of these public benefits would be very modest. There are also requirements for these to be sympathetically designed. There is limited evidence before me that any alternative locations have been considered. Overall, even cumulatively, the sum of public benefits would not outweigh the scale of the harm to the character or appearance of the area or to the designated and non-designated heritage assets.
20. I therefore conclude, in terms of Appeal A, that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. In addition, the proposals would not preserve the significance of heritage assets, given the harm that would be caused to their settings. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies D2, DG1, HE1 and HE2 of the Local Plan. Together, and insofar as they are relevant to the main issues, these seek that good design integrates with the townscape and ensure that development minimises street clutter, the effect on the character and appearance of the area and have special regard and conserve to the historic environment.
21. In respect of Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would be harmful to amenity. I have had regard to the Framework and Local Plan Policies as set out above where they are material to this issue. As I have found harm to visual amenity, it follows that there would be conflict with the aforementioned Local Plan policies.

Other Matters

22. I have been made aware of two other appeal decisions, one of which is Dundee, Scotland, and one in Blackpool. I note the highlighted contents of these decisions. However, I have very limited information on those proposals or their locations. I cannot be certain the site context or legislation is sufficiently similar to alter my opinion.
23. The setting of other listed buildings and locally listed buildings, whilst geographically close to the site, have limited intervisibility due to intervening

buildings and layout of Church Road. Furthermore, the submitted evidence does not indicate that the site has a functional or historical link to the setting of these designated and non-designated heritage assets. As such, I do not find these would be harmed by the proposal.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed and Appeal B should be dismissed.

K Williams

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/U4230/W/25/3365859	BT Group PLC
Appeal B	APP/U4230/H/25/3365861	BT Group PLC