
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by V Simpson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z0116/W/25/3367954

Pavement at Wells Road, near junction with St Johns Lane, Totterdown, Bristol BS4 2BS

- 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 Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10664/F.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 3no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Z0116/H/25/3367955

Pavement at Wells Road, near junction with St Johns Lane, Totterdown, Bristol BS4 2BS

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/106645/A.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 3no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal C Ref: APP/Z0116/W/25/3367956

Pavement o/s 171-173 Greystoke Avenue, Southmead, Bristol BS10 6BA

- 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 Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10666/F.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal D Ref: APP/Z0116/H/25/3367957

Pavement o/s 171-173 Greystoke Avenue, Southmead, Bristol BS10 6BA

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10667/A.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal E – APP/Z0116/W/25/3367958**Pavement o/s 1 Canon's Road, Bristol BS1 5TX**

- 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 Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10726/F.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal F Ref: APP/Z0116/H/25/3367959**Pavement o/s 1 Canon's Road, Bristol BS1 5TX**

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10727/A.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no. associated BT payphones.
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Appeal G – APP/Z0116/W/25/3367960**Pavement o/s Premier Convenience Store, 310 Southmead Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 5EN**

- 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 Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10676/F.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removals
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Appeal H Ref: APP/Z0116/H/25/3367961**Pavement o/s Premier Convenience Store, 310 Southmead Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS10 5EN**

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10677/A.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removals
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Appeal I – APP/Z0116/W/25/3367962**Pavement o/s 52-56 Bond Street, Bristol BS1 3LZ**

- 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 Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10680/F.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no associated BT payphones.
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Appeal J Ref: APP/Z0116/H/25/3367963**Pavement o/s 52-56 Bond Street, Bristol BS1 3LZ**

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10681/A.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1no. BT Street Hub and removal of 2no associated BT payphones.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. 5 planning applications were submitted, each proposing the erection of a BT street hub (hub) in different locations in the Bristol area. The Council issued 2 decisions for each application, one for the proposed hub, and the other for an associated advertisement display. The 10 appeals (A-J) that were subsequently made are the subjects of this decision letter. The pairs of appeals at A & B, C & D, E & F, G & H, and I & J each relate to one of the different sites.
3. Each appeal has been considered on its own merits. However, given the similarities in the proposed schemes and the issues raised, and in the interests of conciseness, a single decision letter is issued.
4. In reaching my decisions on the appeals related to the advertisement displays - i.e. appeals B, D, F, H, and J, I have had regard to the Development Plan policies cited in the evidence, but only in so far as these are material to amenity and public safety considerations.
5. As part of my consideration of these appeals, I visited an existing hub on Merchant Street.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the developments/advertisements on:
 - the character and appearance, and the amenity of the areas - all appeals;
 - risk of crime – appeals A, C, E, G, and I;
 - public safety, with particular regard to highway safety – appeals A & B, E & F, G & H, and I & J; and
 - the convenience and ease of pedestrian movement – appeals A, G and I.

Reasons

Character, appearance, and amenity

Appeals A & B, C & D, G & H, and I & J

7. These appeal sites are all in built-up areas of the city, and close to a range of commercial and/or retail premises. The generally rectangular prism-shaped hubs would be erected on the pavements. They would be orientated such that their largest illuminated faces would be highly visible from nearby locations on these pavements and from the adjacent carriageways.
8. Although not as tall as many nearby lamp posts and/or signposts, and despite having a sleek design, the hubs would have a bulky appearance. They would also add clutter and harmfully erode the openness of the parts of the pavements they would be sited on.
9. Even if some advertisements under the deemed consent regime may have a maximum night-time luminance of 600 candelas per square metre (cd/m²), express consent is sought for the advertisements subject of these appeals. As such, it is

appropriate to consider the effect of the proposed levels of luminance of the hubs in considering this main issue.

10. The appeal sites are in areas with street lighting, where there would be varying degrees of additional light from retail/commercial frontages and vehicles. Consequently, the lighting environments in these areas are fairly typical of what may ordinarily be expected in urban or suburban environments.
11. I have considered the effect of conditions that would restrict the luminance of the lit panels between dusk and dawn to no more than 600 cd/m². However, even with such conditions, at night the panels could still be substantially brighter than the recommended maximum nighttime luminance levels for urban and suburban environments, as identified by the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) in their lighting guide for adverts (guidance)¹.
12. Moreover, during the daytime, the lit panels would all have the potential to be significantly brighter than the maximum recommended luminescence for overcast days identified in the ILP's guidance. In addition, and for the hubs at appeals G & H and I & J, the proposed luminance level would also significantly exceed the ILP's recommended maximum luminance for bright sunny days. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, I accept the recommendations of the ILP in their guidance.
13. Notwithstanding the ambient lighting of the appeal sites, at night and at many times of day, the lit panels and the associated advertisement displays would be highly conspicuous and incongruous additions to the parts of the streets they would be located on. This would be because of their high levels of luminance, their size, and their prominent locations within the public realm.
14. Although there are digital displays on nearby bus shelters, some of these display panels are at least partially obscured by the rest of the bus shelter structure, and they are all at a lower height than the proposed lit displays. For these reasons, these digital displays are less prominent than the appeal schemes would be, and their presence does not lead me away from my previous findings.
15. At least 2 kiosks would be removed as part of each hub scheme. However, and despite many of these existing kiosks being in poor repair and subject of flyposting and/or vandalism, they are substantially less prominent than the proposed hubs would be. For some, this is because they are tucked away under the canopies of trees, close to the walls of nearby buildings, and/or at the rear of the pavement, and for all, it is because they have low levels of light emittance. As such, and even though the schemes would lead to a small overall reduction in the amount of street furniture, the benefits to the character and appearance of the area from the removal of these hubs would be outweighed by the greater harm that would be caused to the character and the appearance of the areas from the proposed hubs.

Appeals E & F

16. The site subject of these appeals is within the City Docks Conservation area (CA). The significance of which stems at least in part from its nationally important maritime heritage with associated quays, docks, and commercial buildings, and the leisure and cultural attractions within it.

¹ Institution of lighting professionals- Professional lighting Guide 05/23 – The brightness of illuminated advertisements including digital displays - 202

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17. The grade II listed buildings at Transit shed E; Attached wall, piers and gates to the north of transit shed E; and the floating harbour quay wall and bollards extending for approximately 900 metres (the listed buildings), are close to the site subject of these appeals. The significance of these buildings, which are all either directly or indirectly related to the historic maritime commercial uses of the area, arises from their architectural and historic interest.
18. The proposed hub structure would be erected on a part of the public realm close to the end of a quay. This area makes a positive contribution to the quality of the street scene, and its relative openness helps the historic significance of the CA and the listed buildings to be more readily understood. Moreover, due to the proximity and the of the site in relation to the listed buildings, I have no reason to doubt that historically, there would have been functional links between these buildings and the appeal site.
19. The contribution that the appeal site makes to the significance of these heritage assets is lessened by the presence of an existing telephone kiosk with a sizable non-digital and unlit advertisement hoarding. However, and notwithstanding this, the otherwise generally open appeal site continues to make a positive contribution to their significance.
20. Although the site is within a vibrant area where there is a wide range of other nearby street furniture, it is away from lit shop windows/displays and other sizable lit advertisements. As such, and despite the sleek form and simple design detailing of the proposed hub structure, the large and bright LED panels that would display the advertisements would make it a prominent and incongruous addition to the street scene. While a decluttering benefit would arise from the reduction in the number of kiosks in the area, those that are proposed to be removed do not include large lit advertisements. As such, and even when taken together, these kiosks are not as harmfully prominent as the proposed hub would be. For these reasons, and albeit to a small extent, the schemes subject of these appeals would detract from the significance of the CA and they would reduce the contribution that the setting of the listed buildings makes to their significance.
21. While the harm to the significance of these heritage assets would be at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial, in accordance with paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the framework), great weight is given to the conservation of these assets.
22. Although the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) provides support for the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation technology, such as 5G, it also states that the number of communications masts, and the sites for such installations, should be kept to a minimum. Even if the proposed hub would help boost 5G coverage, no compelling evidence has been provided demonstrating that the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been sufficiently explored. Very little weight is therefore attributed to the public benefit that would arise from any boost to 5G services in the area.
23. Public benefits would arise from the provision of free digital information and communication services at or close to the hub. However, given the general prevalence of mobile phone availability and usage for communication and information purposes, little weight is given to these benefits. Little weight is also given to the benefit that would arise from being able to charge devices at the hub.

This is because doing so would put the user at increased risk of theft or other related criminal action, and is not therefore likely to be a common or frequent occurrence.

24. Overall, the public benefits do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of the CA or the listed buildings.

Character, appearance and amenity conclusions

25. For these reasons, all of the appeal schemes would cause harm to the character and appearance, and the amenity of the area. In these respects, they would all conflict with SADMP² policies DM26 and DM28. In addition, the schemes at appeals A & B, C & D, G & H, and I & J would conflict with SADMP policy DM27 and Core Strategy³ policy BCS21, and the schemes at appeals C, G and I would conflict with BCAP⁴ policy 30. Appeal E would also conflict with SADMP policy DM27 and BCAP policy 41, and appeals E and F would conflict with SADMP policies DM29, DM31, DM36 and BCAP policy 32. Together, and amongst other things, these policies require development to be of a high quality of design that contributes positively to local character and distinctiveness; to enhance the harbourside's role as an informal leisure destination and a focus for maritime industries; and to safeguard heritage assets.
26. SADMP policy DM23 and Core Strategy policy BCS10 focus on travel and transport. As such, they are not of direct relevance to this main issue.

Crime - appeals A, C, E, G, and I

27. The solid hubs would be large enough to conceal persons/activity, and the light and glare from the screens would, in some cases, prevent the effective use of local CCTV monitoring. I have no doubt that the developments subject of these appeals would further increase the risk of criminal activity both at the hub sites and in the areas close to them. This is because of the substantial volume of criminal incidents reported close to the hubs, and the associated range of reported crimes that include theft, anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, and drug offences. It is also because similar hubs have been used for criminal purposes, targets for criminal damage, and/or a focal point for anti-social behaviour.
28. The implementation of measures such as restricting hub usage and ensuring the hubs are monitored, regularly inspected and cleaned – as identified in The Street Hub Anti-social Behaviour Management Plan – version 3 (SHASBMP), would undoubtedly reduce the risk of criminal activity associated with their presence and use. However, even if all the measures in the SHASBMP were fully implemented, there would still be a residual increased risk of crime in the area surrounding the hubs, which would be to the detriment of street safety. Moreover, and even if other Inspectors have previously determined that the implementation of an anti-social behaviour management plan would reduce the risk of the BT street hub being used for crime to an acceptable degree – as was the case in appeal ref APP/L5240/W/21/3285401, I do not have enough information about the crime rates in that or other areas to draw comparisons with those schemes.

² Bristol City Council – Bristol Local Plan – Site allocations and development management policies local plan – Adopted July 2014

³ Bristol City Council – Bristol Development Framework – Core Strategy – adopted June 2011

⁴ Bristol City Council – Bristol Local Plan - Bristol Central Area Plan – Adopted March 2015

29. For these reasons, the developments at appeals A, C, E, G, and I are likely to increase the risk of crime. Consequently, they would conflict with policies Core Strategy policy BSC21, and SADMP policies DM27, DM28 and DM29. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure safe environments and appropriate natural surveillance.

Public safety – appeals B, E & F, G & H, and I & J

30. The schemes subject of these appeals would all be located close to sections of busy roads, where there are features that require the particular attention of road users to ensure the safe operation of the highway. These features include; pedestrian crossings; traffic lights; complicated junctions with multiple movement desire lines; bus stops; and bike storage areas. Even if the hubs would not directly block road users views of approaching road signs, traffic lights or other features in the highway, they would be located such that they would be close to and highly visible from the nearby carriageways. As a result, and because of their high levels of illumination and the potentially frequent changing of the advertisements, the hubs are likely to distract road users at times when greater than usual amounts of attention are required on the road and road environment. Such distractions would harmfully increase the risk of conflict between vehicle drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and other road users, which would be to the detriment of highway safety.

31. For these reasons, the schemes subject of appeals B, E & F, G & H, and I & J, would cause harm to public safety, with particular regard to highway safety. As such, these schemes would conflict with SADMP policy 23 and Core Strategy policy BCS10. In addition, the schemes subject of appeals E, G and I would conflict with SADMP policy 28 and Core Strategy policy BCS13, and the schemes subject of appeals E & F would conflict with BCAP policy 30. Collectively and amongst other things seek to ensure that development provides safe streets and safe access to all sections of the community, and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Pedestrian movement – appeals A, G and I

32. The hub in appeal A would be located on a wide part of the pavement at the junction between Wells Road and Bushy Park. There are several nearby items of street furniture, including a bin and a lamppost, that pedestrians must navigate past when travelling along this part of the pavement. However, the distance between these features is significantly greater than the depth of some unobstructed parts of the nearby pavement. Albeit to a small extent, the hub would have a narrowing effect on the usable part of a small section of pavement, and its use would have the potential to further reduce the amount of clear space between the development and other nearby street furniture. Nevertheless, pedestrian flows past the hub would not be harmfully reduced. This is because, when taken together, the amount of unobstructed pavement space to each side of the hub would be sufficient to enable easy and convenient pedestrian movement.

33. The hub in appeal G would be in general alignment with nearby bike storage racks, and both it and the racks would be at a similar distance from the nearside edge of the carriageway. As such, the hub would not lead to a further material reduction in the depth of the unobstructed parts of the pavement in this area. Nevertheless, some future users of the hub would reasonably expect to sit or stand close to it, and by doing so, it is possible that the depth of the remaining parts of the clear pavement would be reduced. However, such obstructions are likely to be infrequent and for

short periods of time. Any resultant reduction in the free flow of pedestrians past the development would therefore be occasional and temporary. Notwithstanding this, the proposed removal of the phone kiosk outside of Lidl would widen the available part of the pavement in a location where there is an existing pinch-point. This would be of benefit to the ease and flow of pedestrian movements past it. For these reasons, the development as a whole would not harmfully reduce the convenience or flow of pedestrian movements in the area.

34. The hub in appeal I, would be sited close to the carriageway edge on a deep stretch of pavement. Even if the information and communication services at the hub site were to be in use by pedestrians with or without mobility aids, and notwithstanding the presence of nearby posts and street trees, there would remain sufficient space in the pavement for other users to conveniently pass the hub.
35. For these reasons, the developments subject of appeals A, G and I, would not cause harm to the convenience and ease of pedestrian movement. In this respect, they would comply with Core Strategy policies BCS10 and BCS13, and SADMP policies DM23 and DM28. Amongst other things, these require developments to provide for convenient pedestrian movement, to protect the function of public rights of way and to encourage walking.

Other Matters

36. The public benefits identified in respect of appeal E would apply to all of the proposed hubs. However, and for the same reasons given above, either little or very little weight can be attributed to each of these benefits.
37. Advertising revenue would undoubtedly help fund the ongoing running and maintenance costs of the hubs. However, it is not clear that this revenue source is essential to ensure the communications and information benefits associated with the street hubs.
38. I have considered the decision letters provided in respect of other appeals. However, these relate to sites outside of Bristol with different planning policy contexts. Furthermore, I do not have sufficient information in respect of these appeals to enable direct comparisons to be made between those schemes and the ones subject of these appeals. As such, these appeal decision letters do not lead me away from my previous findings.
39. The site at appeal I is close to and within the setting of the Grade II listed building known as Nos 1, 1A, and 2-6 Brunswick Square and Area Walls. This building comprises a terrace of seven former houses, and its significance stems at least partially from its historic and architectural interest. There would be no intervisibility between the development subject of appeal I and this building. As such, due to the presence of intervening buildings and other development and infrastructure, the development would not cause harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset. However, this finding is a neutral consideration.

Conclusion

40. Notwithstanding my findings on the 4th main issue, all of the schemes would cause harm in respect of the other main issues. These harms and the associated development plan conflict are prevailing considerations.

41. The developments subject of appeals A, C, E, G and I, would therefore conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Moreover, in this case, material considerations do not indicate that these appeals should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

42. I therefore conclude that all the appeals should be dismissed.

V Simpson

INSPECTOR