



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 23 September 2025

by **L Gardner MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/V1505/W/25/3370247

Footpath outside Wych Elm House, Wickford, Billericay SS12 0AW

- 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 of BT Group PLC against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00208/FULL.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/V1505/H/25/3370249

Footpath outside Wych Elm House, Wickford, Billericay SS12 0AW

- 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 of BT Group PLC against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00209/ABAS.
 - The advertisements proposed are two digital 75 inch LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at footpath outside Wych Elm House, Wickford, Billericay SS12 0AW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00208/FULL subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule 1.
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of two digital 75 inch LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit at footpath outside Wych Elm House, Wickford, Billericay SS12 0AW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00209/ABAS, dated 21 February 2025. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations and the additional condition in the attached Schedule 2.

Preliminary Matters

3. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed street hub. Appeal B is in respect to the refusal of an associated advertisement consent which would be an integral part of the proposed hub sought under Appeal A. I have considered both on their individual merits, but as they raise similar issues, I have combined these cases into a single decision letter.

4. In respect to Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. With respect to Appeal B, the development plan policy referred to by the Council is not determinative, but I have taken it into account as a material consideration.
5. The Council's reason for refusal in relation to Appeal B relates specifically to matters of amenity. There was no objection raised on the grounds of public safety and I find no reason to take a different view on that matter.
6. The appellant has referred to the removal of two existing phone kiosks, one close to the appeal site and the other at Silva Island Way, as part of a programme to replace and rationalise the existing network of payphones. However, I note that the removal of these existing kiosks is not referred to within the description of development or included within the red line site location plan. Their removal therefore does not fall within the development before me, and I have not considered it further.

Main Issues

7. The main issue in relation to Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. The main issue in relation to Appeal B is the effect of the proposal on visual amenity.

Reasons

8. Saved Policy BAS TC1 of the Basildon District Local Plan (the Local Plan) states that within the town centres, proposals will be assessed against various criteria. One of these includes a need for the development to have a design, form and scale which is sympathetic and appropriate to the area. Saved Policy BAS BE18 of the Local Plan relates specifically to advertisements stating that the Council will have regard to, amongst other matters, the likely impact of the advertisement on the local environment.
9. The footway within which the appeal site is situated is within Wickford town centre close to a busy traffic intersection between High Street, London Road and Nevendon Road. The site is close to the corner of the junction where the footway widens partially to facilitate a pedestrian crossing, leading to the commercial uses on the opposite side of the junction along the High Street.
10. Whilst the appeal site itself is void of existing street furniture, the immediately surrounding area features various forms of street furniture including streetlamps, a phone kiosk, pedestrian crossing signals, traffic signals, railings, planters, electricity boxes and a bench. Further from the site, along London Road, there is also a freestanding advertising board, and a bus stop shelter with an associated advertisement board.
11. Rather than having an open visual character, the appeal site forms part of a streetscape which already accommodates street furniture of various forms and scale. Given the location of the site at a busy traffic intersection, and the width of the footway, the existing street furniture fits comfortably within the street environment, without appearing overly cluttered.

12. The proposed street hub would add an additional piece of street furniture. Even without the removal of the nearby phone kiosk (which cannot be controlled through this appeal proposal) the street hub and its associated advertisements would not result in undue clutter to the character of the area or appear overly prominent within the street scene. It would be visually interpreted with the existing elements of street furniture, including the existing advertisement boards of a similar scale further down London Road.
13. I am aware that the appellant is also in the process of appealing another similar form of development along the High Street¹. The context of that site is materially different to the appeal site, being part of the pedestrian thoroughfare along Wickford High Street. Noting the distance between the two sites, it would be unlikely that the two developments, if both were to be allowed, would be interpreted frequently in the same visual context. Any cumulative effects would therefore be limited.
14. Based on the above I conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area and visual amenity. The proposal would therefore comply with Saved Policies BAS TC1 and BAS BE18 of the Local Plan, as well as the provisions of the Framework.

Other Matters

15. The appeal site is within close proximity to the Grade II listed Milestone at the junction of London Road and Nevendon Road. I have therefore had regard to the duty within Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building.
16. The special interest and significance of the listed building is derived in part from its historical associations as a wayfinding point. Notwithstanding the appeal sites proximity, and that there would be intervisibility between the proposal and the listed building, in my judgement, the appeal proposal would preserve the setting of the Milestone, the significance of which would not be harmed.
17. Representations have been received from interested parties objecting to the proposal, partially in relation to the potential for the structure to block visibility of nearby commercial uses. As above, I have found that the scale and form of the street hub would be appropriate to its setting. Its positioning would be towards the edge of the footway; some distance from the nearest commercial uses. I have therefore identified no harm in respect to the commercial viability of nearby uses.

Conditions

18. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council, having regard to the six tests set out in paragraph 57 of the Framework. Where necessary I have amended the wording in the interests of precision and enforceability.
19. In respect to Appeal A I have imposed a condition listing the approved drawings in the interests of clarity in addition to the standard time condition. In the interests of maintaining the character and appearance of the area, I have imposed a condition requiring compliance with the materials stated within the application documents.

¹ APP/V1505/W/25/3368385 linked with APP/V1505/H/25/3368386

The condition suggested by the Council in relation to the illuminance of the advertisements is not relevant or necessary to be imposed with Appeal A.

20. In relation to Appeal B, in addition to the five standard conditions set out within Schedule 2 of the Regulations, it is necessary to control the illumination of the advertisements in the interests of visual amenity and to prevent the advertisements standing out significantly from the background illumination of the street, particularly during hours of darkness.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be allowed, subject to the conditions set out in my formal decisions.

L Gardner

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULES OF CONDITIONS

SCHEDULE 1 - Appeal A Ref: APP/V1505/W/25/3370247

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos WCK-102 Rev. B "Proposed Site Plan", WCK-102 Rev. B "Proposed Site Elevation" and "BT Street Hub Unit Dimensions".
- 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials detailed within the document "BT Street Hubs Beyond Connection".

SCHEDULE 2 - Appeal B Ref: APP/V1505/H/25/3370249

- 1) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisements permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/m² between dusk and dawn, consistent with guidance set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals publication Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (PLG05, 2023) (or its equivalent in a replacement guide).

END OF SCHEDULES OF CONDITIONS