
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 29 July 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3362839

Footpath Outside 10-10A Flixton Road, Urmston, Manchester M41 5AA

- 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 Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 115201/FUL/24.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Q4245/H/25/3362840

Footpath Outside 10-10A Flixton Road, Urmston, Manchester M41 5AA

- 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 Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 115202/ADV/24.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

3. 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

4. The two appeals relate to the same appeal site. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed communication kiosk. Appeal B is in respect of refusal of advertisement consent for the digital advertisement display which would be an integral part of the proposed kiosk. I have considered each appeal on its individual merits, but as they raise similar issues, I have combined these cases in a single decision letter.
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) 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 policies referred to by the Council are not determinative, but I have taken these into account as a material consideration.

6. The Council have raised no objections in relation to public safety. I have no reason to form a different view.

Main Issues

7. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposed hub on the character and appearance of the area.
8. The main issue in respect of Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

9. The appeal site relates to a section of pavement on Flixton Road in the centre of Urmston. This section of footway consists of a wide section of the pavement in front of a variety of commercial units. It is generally free of street-based installations and as a result the appeal site and the immediate surroundings maintains an uncluttered and open character.
10. The proposed hub would occupy a prominent position within the busy footway adjacent to Flixton Road. It would be relatively utilitarian in its appearance and through a combination of both its height and width the hub would be a visually intrusive and bulky addition to this section of the footway.
11. Furthermore, its siting directly adjacent to the highway in an isolated position would be viewed as a highly incongruous addition. Accordingly, the hub would appear as an isolated, large and overly dominant feature within the street scene. This impact would be exacerbated by the modern appearance and rotating advertising screen, which further highlights the incongruity of the proposal within its context.
12. As such, the incompatible and prominent siting of the proposed digital advertisement, made more conspicuous by its illumination and changing images, would undermine the existing qualities of the area. It would introduce visual intrusion and further heighten the prominence of the hub in this location due to the dual aspect of the proposals. The proposed advertisement would therefore result in harm to the visual amenity of the area. This prominence would be the case even if the levels of illumination and the speed and frequency of image transitions on the display screen were carefully controlled.
13. I have reviewed the public benefits put forward by the appellant including but not limited to the provision of free public Wi-Fi, 4G and 5G coverage, use of renewable energy sources, use as USB charging facility, ability to contact emergency services and free advertisement for the council. I also acknowledge that Chapter 10 of the Framework confirms that advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being as well as supports the expansion of electronic communications networks.
14. However, it is not clear from the information before me to what extent there is a need for the publicly accessible facilities such as public Wi-Fi provision in the area over and above the existing provision. The proposed use of the facility by the

Council to promote their initiatives is also not explained in terms of whether this is needed or how it would be delivered. On balance, whilst I recognise that there would be some public benefits from the proposal, I find that they would be ancillary to the advertising aspect and as such only attract limited weight in this recommendation. I, therefore, am not satisfied that the public benefits identified outweigh the visual harm from the proposal.

15. Accordingly, Appeal A would be contrary to Policy JPP1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024). Which seeks for development to respect the character and identity of the locality.
16. With regard to Appeal B, in accordance with the Regulations, I have considered the provisions of the development plan so far as it is relevant. Policy JPP1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) and Policy PG14 of the Planning Guidelines Advertisements SPD both seek to protect visual amenity. As I have concluded that the advertisement would harm visual amenity, Appeal B conflicts with this policy and guidance as well as the amenity aims of the Framework.

Other Matters

17. The appellant has referred to the presence of other larger street furniture in the surrounding area as setting a precedent for the proposal. However, whilst this may be the case in the wider surrounding area it would not alleviate the harm I have identified in regard to scale and size and the impact it would have on the amenity of the area surrounding the appeal site. Furthermore, I do not have full details of the planning background relating to these examples.
18. The appellant has made reference to other digital signage elsewhere in the country and to appeal decisions where signage has been allowed. These examples relate to differing contexts to the appeal site due to their geographical locations, and again I do not have full details of the planning background relating to these examples. Therefore, they do not justify the appeal proposal which would be harmful to the amenity of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. For the reasons given above, the proposals subject to Appeal A and Appeal B would harm the character and appearance and amenity of the area, and in the case of Appeal A, would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Whilst the proposals would offer public benefits, these would not outweigh the harms identified. Accordingly, I conclude that both Appeals A and B should be dismissed.

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeals are dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR