
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: 20 October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3362850

Footpath outside 87 Washway Road, Sale M33 7TQ

- 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 115203/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/25/3362851

Footpath outside 87 Washway Road, Sale M33 7TQ

- 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 115204/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 allowed, and planning permission is granted for 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at Footpath outside 87 Washway Road, Sale M33 7TQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 115203/FUL/24, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers: TRF – 113 Rev B Proposed Site Plan, TRF – 113 Rev B Proposed Site Elevation. TRF – 113 Existing and Proposed Views, BT Street Hub Unit Dimensions and associated 1:1250 Location Plan.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall accord with the materials specified within the submitted Street Hub Product Statement (V2.0, September 2024).
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at Footpath outside 87 Washway Road, Sale M33 7TQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 115204/ADV/24. 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 Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) and the following additional condition:

- 1) The intensity of the illumination of the illuminated sign permitted by this consent should not exceed 600 cd/sqm during the hours of darkness.

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 proposal on the same site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission to erect a street hub unit (the hub). Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for advertisement panels on either side of the hub. I have considered each appeal on its individual merits, however, as they raise similar issues, I have combined both decisions into a single decision letter.
5. In respect of Appeal B, the Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken account of the policies that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

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

Reasons for the Recommendations

8. The appeal site is a section of pavement situated on Washway Road, a busy section of the A56 situated within the suburb of Sale which is active with both road and foot traffic. The surrounding area is generally commercial with a variety of shops, restaurants and drinking establishments. There are occasional items of street furniture situated on this side of the carriageway including lampposts and a phone box. To the opposing side of the highway is a similar arrangement however there is also a post box and bus stop with an incorporated digital screen.
9. The appeal proposal includes the removal of the existing phone box adjacent to the site and the erection of a digital street hub with advertisement panels to both elevations. The hub would house features that provide free Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging, access to emergency services and other facilities.
10. The existing phone box holds a bulky appearance due to its depth, width and height and was in a poor condition. I therefore consider the removal of this would result in an enhancement to the public realm in visual terms. Whilst the proposed hub would be closer to the carriageway, I do not consider it to be more overly prominent than the existing situation.
11. The proposed hub would evidently be taller and include illuminated digital displays to both elevations which would arguably increase the prominence of the proposal in

comparison to the phone box. Nevertheless, given the commercial nature of the area and the existing features within the street scene, including the digital screen to the opposing side of the highway, the increase in height and prominence resulting from the proposal, as well as the introduction of illuminated advertisement displays, would not be of such imposition that it would lead to harm to the visual amenity of the area.

12. When viewed in the context of the busy commercial backdrop to the appeal site, the proposed hub, with advertisement panels, would not appear incongruous, either on its own or in combination with other nearby furniture and advertisements. As a result, the proposed adverts would not result in an over proliferation in this commercial setting.
13. Whilst the hub would be taller than the existing phone box, I consider it to have a neutral impact upon visual clutter within the area due to the removal of the phone box with the hub possessing a sleeker modern design.
14. I acknowledge that the prevailing character of signage in the wider area is generally non illuminated. However, I observed on my site visit that there are various illuminated signs at intervals along Washway Road including the digital screen at the bus stop on the opposite side of the road to the appeal site. As a result, I consider the introduction of a further digital hub would not have an unacceptable impact upon the visual amenity of the area and would be read in conjunction with the other illuminated signs and displays that are present.
15. I conclude that the proposed hub and adverts would not harm the character, appearance or amenity of the area. The proposal therefore complies with Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) which seeks, amongst other things, that development respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used; and incorporates high quality in the design and finish of the public realm. The proposal would also accord with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'), which have similar aims.
16. I have also had regard to the Council's Advertisements SPD. Given that I have concluded that the proposal would not harm visual amenity for the reasons detailed above, I therefore conclude the proposal would not conflict with this guidance.

Other Matters

17. In addition to the main issues that I have addressed above, a number of additional concerns have been raised by interested parties in relation to the proposal.
18. The pavement area where the appeal site is situated is wide and generally clutter free and the proposed kiosk would not obstruct the free flow of pedestrians in either direction. Its siting close to a busy highway with street lighting in a commercial area would mean that any users of the proposal would be subject to a degree of natural surveillance. The Council and Local Highway Authority have not suggested the proposal would affect public safety and I have no reason to disagree. Although it is asserted that digital advertising screens have been associated with crime and anti-social behaviour, this has not been substantiated within the evidence before me.
19. With regard to the potential health effects of any telecommunications equipment within the proposed hub and its compliance with the International Commission

guidelines on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection ('ICNIRP'), the appellant has confirmed that the proposal would not contain any equipment of this nature, such as 4G or 5G transmitters. As no mast or base station is proposed, it is not necessary for ICNIRP self-certification to be provided in this instance.

20. Concerns have also been provided in relation to the effect of the proposal on children and others with longstanding health issues or a disability, including the visually impaired. I have, therefore, had regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty ('PSED') set out at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Protected characteristics include people within certain age groups, including children, and those with disabilities.
21. In considering the proposal, I have considered PSED and the needs of all users of the highway and I find that the size and siting of the hub and advertisements would not disproportionately affect people with a protected characteristic. Furthermore, although additional concerns have been put before me in relation to impact of the proposal upon human health there is no evidence specific to this proposal and the appeal sites specific location before me, which would substantiate such concerns. As a result, the PSED does not lead me to conclude that the appeals should be dismissed on such a basis.
22. In regard to the impact on climate change, the evidence before me indicates that the proposal would be powered by renewable energy and on this basis, I am satisfied that it would not undermine climate change objectives. Nor is there any substantive evidence before me which would indicate that the proposal would be harmful to biodiversity interests.
23. The use of CCTV within the proposal, along with environmental monitoring and public Wi-Fi and the data protection implications of such equipment and services are matters falling within the control of other legislation, and are not, therefore determinative matters in these appeals.
24. In addition, there is no requirement for the appellant to demonstrate a need for the development, and I am mindful of the government's broad support for high quality communications, as set out within the Framework.

Conditions

25. The Council has suggested a number of conditions in the event that the appeal be allowed. The appellant has not objected to the suggested conditions. I have altered the wording where necessary to better reflect the advice set out in the Planning Practice Guidance concerning the use of planning conditions, without changing their overall intention.
26. In relation to Appeal A, I have attached a standard time limit condition (1) and a condition setting out the approved drawings (2). These are required in the interests of clarity. I have attached a condition (3) requiring the proposal to be constructed in accordance with the cited details in relation to proposed materials. Given the level of detail provided, a condition requiring further submission of such details would be unnecessary. The condition is required in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

27. In relation to Appeal B, the consent is granted subject to the five conditions set out in the Regulations and it is not necessary to repeat or reattach them. I have also attached an additional condition (1) relating to the maximum illumination level of the proposed advertisements during darkness hours in the interests of the amenity of the area. The Council also suggested that a similar condition be attached in relation to Appeal A, however such a condition would be unnecessary duplication, and I have, therefore, omitted it.

Conclusion and Recommendations

28. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal A and appeal B should be allowed.

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decisions

29. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis both appeals are allowed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR