
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 8 September 2025

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q3630/W/25/3366408

Footpath outside of Tesco, 60-63 High Street, Egham TW20 9EX

- 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 Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RU.24/1611.
 - 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/Q3630/H/25/3366409

Footpath outside of Tesco, 60-63 High Street, Egham TW20 9EX

- 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 Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is RU.24/1652.
 - 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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Decision

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

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same appeal site and to each other. Appeal A follows the refusal of planning permission for a freestanding street hub unit (the development). Appeal B relates to the refusal of advertisement consent for two digital display screens (the advertisements) which would be an integral part of the development. I have determined both appeals on their individual merits but dealt with the two together below to avoid duplication.
4. The appeal site is near 65 High Street (No 65), a Grade II listed building¹. I have a statutory duty in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, 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. The reasons for refusal do not explicitly cite harm to the setting of No 65 but do refer to conflict with section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

¹ List Entry 1189267.

5. Overall, the Council's submissions make clear its position in respect of No 65, and the appellant has addressed the issue directly. As such, I have not considered it necessary to seek comments from either main party on this matter.
6. In respect of Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 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. I proceed accordingly.
7. I am the appointed Inspector for other appeals concerning directly comparable proposals by the same appellant, both in the borough of Runnymede and in other Local Authority areas near it. Given the similarity of the proposals, the issues involved, and the extent of repetition in the submissions, my decisions will inevitably appear similar. Each proposal has, however, been assessed on its individual merits.

Main Issues

8. For Appeal A, the main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the Egham Conservation Area (the CA) and No 65, and
 - the effect on highway safety.
9. For Appeal B, the main issues are:
 - the effects of the advertisement on visual amenity, including on the CA and No 65, and
 - the effect on public safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance and visual amenity

10. The appeal site is a section of pavement alongside a forecourt area in Egham town centre. The forecourt is enclosed to the east by No 65, and the site is in the CA.
11. The forecourt area is flanked along its longest side by three and four-storey buildings which, in the main, are of modest architectural merit and little evident historical interest. Much the same may be said of The Precinct, a mixed-use development which the forecourt faces out onto. Whilst the forecourt includes a piece of public art, bike racks, lampposts, litter bins, a mature street tree, and a range of seating, it is not evident that these features, or indeed the forecourt overall, result from a coherent, holistic design; The space has a rather piecemeal character in that respect.
12. Even so, the forecourt area is readily distinguishable from the rest of the High Street; It has a distinct surface made using large slabs, a row of highway bollards at its edge and, moreover, is the largest, and evidently the principle open area in the street. Third parties inform me that it is used for local events, and the features described above define it as an open, municipal public space in the heart of the town.

13. The statutory duty set out in Section 72 of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The High Street runs through the centre of Egham on a broadly east-west axis and is historically the main street in the town. Whilst a number of more modern developments exist along the street, so too do a number of more historic buildings, some of which are listed. Whatever may be said of the redevelopment over time of the High Street, its remaining historic buildings have not been obscured or obstructed by subsequent development. They serve as a prominent illustration of the history and development of the street and, by extension the town. For the purposes of the appeals, this is the significance of the CA.
14. The appeal site is located close to No 65, and there are no significant intervening structures between the two. As such, the former is part of the setting of the latter. No 65 is a former butcher's shop which, for the purposes of the appeals, derives its significance from its decorative shopfront which is a striking feature in the immediate surrounds.
15. There are a range of advertisements in the area near the appeal site, but in the main they are affixed to, and promote, the premises to which they relate. There is little general advertising in the High Street. These features give a sense of order and legibility to what is a visually busy environment.
16. The development would be a freestanding hub unit some 2.9m tall and 1.2m wide, with an LCD display screen on either side. It would be relatively slim in profile but positioned at a right angle to the High Street and be highly prominent when approached from the east or west, and from around the forecourt, on which there is no structure of comparable size or appearance. It would have an incongruous presence in that respect. Visually, given its height and width, the development would harmfully dominate the forecourt area, and views along the High Street.
17. The southernmost section of No 65, including its shopfront, is set forward of its neighbouring buildings to the west. This, and its decorative detailing, make it a prominent, beneficial feature in the street, including as a historical reference point. It is particularly noticeable in views across the forecourt, the openness of which assists greatly in providing prominence to No 65.
18. For those approaching the appeal site along the High Street from the west, particularly on the southern side of the street, the development would significantly obscure eastward views of No 65. This would be a striking and harmful change to the arrangement described above, undermining the prominence of No 65. In these ways, the development would harm the significance of the CA and the setting of No 65.
19. In addition to the above, the display of advertisements unrelated to the parade would introduce competing visual elements that would undermine the current visual legibility and order.
20. The appellant contends that the development would be seen in the context of a poor-quality built environment and, as such, respect that context and preserve the setting. Whilst I have found that many of the buildings around the appeal site lack historical and architectural merit, that does not mean that a poor-quality environment results overall. Indeed, I have identified above just some of its

relevant beneficial and positive aspects, against which the proposals have been assessed.

21. My attention has been drawn to a previous decision by the Council², and to three previous appeals³. I have been provided with excerpts from these, rather than full details. In terms of the signage approved by the Council, I have no details to show that it is comparable to the proposals before me, or that it conflicts in a comparable way with the underlying rationale of local advertising.
22. Insofar as the previous appeals are concerned, I do not doubt that proposals of the type before me have been found acceptable in other settings, but each proposal must be assessed on its merits in the context of the host site. I have been given little evidence that any of the cited cases include settings directly comparable to that found at the appeal site. Overall, these previous decisions carry minimal weight in my determination.
23. Regarding Appeal A, I find that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would also fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and the setting of No 65 would not be preserved. The proposals would be contrary to Policies EE1, EE4, and EE5 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (2020) (the Local Plan) where they require development to create attractive places that contribute positively to townscape and the public realm; to maintain, sustain and enhance the significance and special architectural and historic interest of listed buildings; and protect, conserve, and wherever possible enhance, the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas. It would also fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, and the historic environment protection policies of the Framework. Given that the effects would not be irreversible, I consider the harm to the heritage assets to be less than substantial.
24. Regarding Appeal B, for the reasons given, I find that the advertisement would cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the provisions of the development plan, insofar as they are relevant, have been considered. As I have concluded that the advertisement harms the amenity of the area, the scheme does not meet with the aims of Policies EE1, EE4, and EE5 of the Local Plan. For the same reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to the provisions of paragraph 141 of the Framework which states, amongst other things, that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited.

Highway and Public safety

25. The High Street includes a vehicular highway, which runs directly alongside the forecourt. There are no designated crossing points near the appeal site and, given the range of commercial offerings at The Precinct and the presence of the external stairs to the upper floors of that development, it is likely that pedestrians will cross the road near the appeal site frequently.
26. The development would be positioned some 500mm back from the edge of the road, and given its height, width, and orientation, would significantly interrupt

² Application Ref: RU.22/0758.

³ Appeal Refs ADA-180-2017; APP/J2373/H/22/3305072; APP/H5960/W/22/3308053.

intervisibility between drivers travelling along the road and pedestrians about to cross it, increasing the chance of a collision between the two. This risk would be exacerbated by the display of the advertisements, which may distract attention.

27. I recognise that vehicular traffic travels in one way along the High Street, meaning that pedestrians crossing the road to the west of the development, or at other points along the road, would not be subject to the risks described above. However, I see no reason why people would not also cross the road from the forecourt east of the development. Whilst there are speed restrictions on the High Street, vehicles may travel at 20mph. I see no reason why a vehicle travelling at that speed should not still pose a risk to safety in the event of a collision.
28. In respect of Appeal A, the development would have a harmful effect on highway safety, contrary to Policy SD4 of the Local Plan which requires development to maintain or enhance the efficient and safe operation of the highway network.
29. Regarding Appeal B, for the reasons given, I find that the advertisements would compromise public safety. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the provisions of the development plan, insofar as they are relevant, have been considered. As set out above, the scheme does not comply with Policy SD4, given its objectives as described above.

Heritage Balance

30. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of the development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification. I have found the harm in this instance to be less than substantial. Under such circumstances paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
31. The process described above is not applicable to the advertisement, only to the development given the heritage-related consent regimes under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990⁴. That said, the screens are an integral part of the development, and I have assessed them as such.
32. The development would use renewable energy to provide services including 4G and 5G coverage, Wi-Fi connection, free phone calls to emergency services, and USB ports for rapid device charging. I see no reason to doubt that it would be well-maintained. These are public benefits, and would contribute towards advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure, which the Framework states is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The hub would also be a facility from which other technologies may be deployed to capture environmental data and measure air quality. Local notices could be displayed on the screens. Whilst I acknowledge the benefits listed above, I have little to demonstrate unmet local need for any of the services that would be supplied, or to show that similar facilities could not be provided without the proposed development.

⁴ Framework Footnote 74 refers.

33. Small businesses feel they would benefit from advertising, and the proposed screens may provide it. That said, I have little to show me that businesses around the appeal site have either the need, or any arrangement in place, to advertise through the proposed development. An initiative on the part of BT to gift advertising space is noted but appears out of date now. I attach minimal weight to these aspects.
34. As part of the appeal proposals, two existing telephone boxes would be removed from outside Unit 1 of The Precinct, and from the footpath outside 102 High Street respectively. The first of these is placed tight into the internal corner of a tall building where, compared to the proposed development, it has an inconspicuous presence. The second is on an approach road to the town centre in a location which, again compared to the appeal site, is not prominent in the heart of the town. I recognise that both boxes are showing signs of age, but have little reason to believe that they cannot or will not be repaired and maintained.
35. Overall, the removal of the existing boxes would be a benefit of the scheme, but not one capable of outweighing the harms identified, particularly given that the Framework advises that, when considering the impact of a development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation.

Conclusion

36. For the reasons given, the proposals under Appeal A and Appeal B would harm the character and appearance and visual amenity of the area, including heritage assets therein and also compromise highway and public safety. Whilst I recognise that the proposals would offer public benefits, these would not outweigh the harms identified.
37. I conclude that Appeals A and B are dismissed.

A Knight

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/Q3630/W/25/3366408	BT Group PLC
Appeal B	APP/Q3630/H/25/3366409	BT Group PLC