
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by K Reeves BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 November 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/R0335/W/25/3365152

Pavement o/s 37 Braccan Walk, Bracknell RG12 1BE

- 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 Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00732/FUL.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removal.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/R0335/H/25/3365153

Pavement o/s 37 Braccan Walk, Bracknell RG12 1BE

- 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 Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00733/A.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removal.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. The descriptions of development as set out above include reference to BT phone kiosk removal, although those structures are not identified within the application site boundary and there is no alternative mechanism before me which would secure their removal. As they are not located within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, their removal would not be determinative to the appeals.
4. Appeal A seeks planning permission for the installation of a BT Street Hub, while Appeal B concerns the associated application for advertisement consent. As both appeals relate to the same site and proposal, I have considered them together to avoid unnecessary duplication.
5. With respect to Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) specify that decisions must be based solely on considerations of amenity and public safety. The Council has not raised any objections on the grounds of public safety, and I see no reason to reach a different conclusion.

Main Issues

6. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area. The main issue in respect of Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisements on the amenity of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site is located within a pedestrianised shopping precinct, characterised by broad avenues lined with retail units. The main thoroughfares are typically flanked by tall commercial buildings, creating a defined urban corridor. However, the avenue widens noticeably around the appeal site, resulting in a more open and spacious environment.
8. Around the site, the built form recedes on one side, allowing for the introduction of soft landscaping elements such as trees and grass, which enhance the visual amenity of the area. Although the setting remains predominantly commercial, with existing advertisements present, the generous width of the avenue and the presence of greenery contribute to a less congested and more visually pleasant streetscape, particularly notable within an urban context.
9. The proposed Street Hub, with its considerable height, would form a box-like structure that would appear visually dominant within the street scene. Its scale, orientation and digital screens would result in an imposing presence. Furthermore, its proximity to an existing digital advertisement hub would create an unanticipated concentration of such installations in an area where advertising structures are typically well-spaced or integrated with specific buildings, thereby disrupting the established visual rhythm of the streetscape.
10. While advertisements and illuminated signage are a familiar feature of the area's commercial character, the introduction of the proposed digital hub, when viewed alongside the existing installation, would result in a cumulative visual impact that is both prominent and intrusive. Even with controls on screen brightness, the advertisements would remain conspicuous within the streetscape and would cause visual harm.
11. I have reviewed the other Inspector decisions submitted in evidence by the appellant. However, these examples relate to different settlements and are likely to reflect site-specific circumstances. As such, they are not directly comparable to the case before me. My decision is therefore based on the particular characteristics and context of this locality.
12. For these reasons, with regard to Appeal A, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would conflict with Policies LP28, LP43 and LP52 of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan 2020 – 2037 (LP), and Policy HO8 of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2036, which collectively seek, in part, for the design of new development to have regard to local character and positively contribute to placemaking, development in defined centres to not harm the character of the area, and advertisements to not have an unacceptable impact on amenity, including visual amenity.
13. In relation to Appeal B, and in accordance with the relevant Regulations, I have considered the provisions of the development plan to the extent that they are

applicable. The aforementioned policies are therefore material considerations in this context. The proposal would have an unacceptable harmful impact on the amenity of the area and would not meet with the objectives of the above policies.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that an advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. The Framework also seeks to support the expansion of electronic communications networks.
15. The proposed Street Hub would be powered by renewable energy and designed to deliver a suite of essential digital services, including free public Wi-Fi, phone calls, emergency access, and environmental monitoring. Its solar-powered structure incorporates public-facing features such as emergency service contact capability and real-time connectivity tools that promote digital inclusion. The interactive display screens offer potential for use by the Council and emergency services to broadcast public service messages. Furthermore, the unit is engineered to support future provision of 5G coverage, subject to operator requirements, enhancing its long-term value to the community.
16. While these features represent potential benefits, it has not been demonstrated that they could not be delivered through alternative means or in a different location. Furthermore, there is no certainty that the 5G capability would be implemented at all.
17. In relation to Appeal B, even if the structure supporting the advertisements were to offer broader public benefits in terms of enhanced communications infrastructure, this is not a consideration that carries weight under the Regulations. Similarly, while the advertisements may include public awareness messaging, the specific content of such messaging falls outside the scope of this appeal.
18. Whilst it is stated that the proposal would result in the removal of two existing BT phone kiosks, this aspect is not determinative to the appeals. The application documents indicate that the kiosks are not located near the appeal site, nor are they identified within the application site boundary. Furthermore, no alternative mechanism has been provided to secure their removal. Consequently, I afford limited weight to this consideration.
19. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance, and overall amenity of the area. As such, the scheme would also conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. While the proposal offers certain public benefits, these are not sufficient to outweigh the identified harms. I therefore conclude that both Appeals A and B should be dismissed.

K Reeves

INSPECTOR