



Appeal Decisions

Site visits made on 29 September 2025 and 27 October 2025

by **R Major BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/B4215/W/25/3369545

Footpath outside Sport City, ASDA, Ashton New Road, Manchester M11 4BD

- 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 Simon Warner of BT Group PLC against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref is 142776/FO/2025.
- The development proposed is described as installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369546

Footpath outside Sport City, ASDA, Ashton New Road, Manchester M11 4BD

- 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 Simon Warner of BT Group PLC against the decision of Manchester City Council.
- The application Ref is 142777/AOH/2025.
- The advertisement proposed is described as installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.

Decision

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for installation of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at footpath outside Sport City, ASDA, Ashton New Road, Manchester M11 4BD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 142776/FO/2025, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for display of 1no. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at footpath outside Sport City, ASDA, Ashton New Road, Manchester M11 4BD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 142777/AOH/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 conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

3. 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.
4. In respect of Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (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.

5. An initial site visit was made on 29 September 2025. A follow-up site visit was undertaken on 27 October 2025.

Main Issues

6. The main issues in respect of Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - highway and pedestrian safety.
7. The main issues in respect of Appeal B are the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity and public safety.

Reasons

Character, appearance and visual amenity

8. The appeal relates to a grass verge to the northeast of the busy, traffic light-controlled junction of Alan Turing Way (A6010) and Ashton New Road (A662). The surrounding area mainly consists of commercial, leisure and transport uses, including a large ASDA superstore and Velopark Metrolink stop to the east, and the Manchester City Joie Stadium to the south, on the opposite side of Alan Turing Way.
9. Within the wider area the Etihad Stadium is a prominent and dominant structure to the west and to the north the Co-Op Live Arena is visible. The Nexen footbridge over the adjacent junction, is also a visibly prominent structure from the appeal site.
10. To the southwest, on the opposite side of the junction, are properties predominantly in residential use within the Grey Mare Masterplan area, which is identified for residential led regeneration. However, these properties are currently well screened from the appeal site by existing vegetation.
11. The appeal proposal seeks to erect a street hub unit, with advertisement panels on either side. The proposed installation would be an upstanding rectangular structure and would house features that provide free Wi-Fi, free UK calls, USB charging, access to emergency services and other facilities.
12. The grassed verge upon which the hub would be sited is adjacent to a wide area of pedestrianised public realm which consists of various items of existing street furniture, including bins, handrails, lighting columns, tree planters, traffic lights, road signs, posts and tram wires. The presence of street furniture is therefore an established characteristic within this expanse of public realm and the wider area in general.
13. Additionally, the ASDA store to the east includes a large hanging sign below its overhanging roof, as well as a large freestanding totem sign. Both these adverts are prominently visible from the appeal site.
14. Considering the commercial site context, as well as other existing items of street furniture within this section of public realm, the siting and appearance of the proposed installation would be in keeping with its surroundings. Its simple, modern design would be compatible with the nearby commercial and leisure uses, and I find that the proposal would not represent an obtrusive, visually prominent or incongruous item, either on its own or in combination with other nearby furniture. It would therefore

not adversely affect its immediate surroundings or unacceptably harm views along this major orbital traffic route into the city.

15. In coming to this view I acknowledge that the hub would be taller than some of the existing items of street furniture within this area of public realm. Nevertheless, there are nearby existing items of street furniture that are considerably taller than the hub, such as lighting columns, road signs, traffic lights and the posts housing the tram cables. Thus, I do not find its height would be dominant and out of keeping with its surroundings.
16. In addition, as mentioned, there are large advertisements associated with the nearby ASDA store which are visible from the appeal site and these are substantially larger than the proposed hub. Furthermore, to the north of the appeal site the Co-Op Live Arena is visible, and the top of this modern building includes a large, rotating digital display. Thus, I find the addition of a modern and smaller digital display at the appeal site would not be out of keeping within the wider commercial context.
17. As such, given the existing adverts I observed in this commercial setting, subject to conditions to control the images displayed and illumination levels, I can see no harm to visual amenity arising from the size, position and method of illumination of the advertisement on the hub.
18. I am aware that the Council is currently reviewing its street furniture and working on a Street Furniture Guidance Strategy. However, I have limited information before me as to what this review or guidance strategy will entail, particularly in relation to the appeal site.
19. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that whilst the addition of the hub would result in an additional piece of street furniture which increases clutter, it would not be to an unacceptable degree. The hard surfaced area used for walking in this location is wide and sufficient areas free from furniture would remain.
20. I do not therefore find the inclusion of the hub would result in an over proliferation of street items and an acceptable balance between the amount of street furniture and a clear and useable area of public realm would remain, especially as the hub would be located on a grassed verge rather than the pavement. I also find the black colour of the proposed installation would be in keeping with the colour of the adjacent bin, lighting column and tree planter boxes.
21. For the reasons given, I also find the proposed development would not undermine the ongoing regeneration objectives of the wider area. Furthermore, given the physical and visual separation created by the busy junction, bridge and existing vegetation, the installation would not negatively impact upon the delivery of the Grey Mare Lane Masterplan area.
22. In view of all the above, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area. I therefore find no conflict with Policies DM1, EN1, SP1, C1, C2, C4, EC7 and T1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and amended 2024) (CS), saved Policies E3.3 and DC15 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) (UDP) and Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024), where they together seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development is appropriate, respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and

materials used; incorporates high quality in the design and finish of the public realm; improves the pedestrian environment; upgrades the appearance of major radial and orbital roads; and considers wider design objectives and takes advantage of important frontages. The proposal would also accord with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which have similar aims.

Highway, pedestrian and public safety

23. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) acknowledges that all advertisements are intended to attract attention and that there are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality. However, the PPG also states that proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety.
24. To the south of the appeal site is a busy traffic light-controlled junction. The traffic lights at this junction are not annotated on the submitted plans and neither party has provided details in respect of the distance between the proposed hub and these traffic lights. As such, I have based my assessment of the impacts of the proposal on the information that is before me and my observations on site.
25. When travelling south along Alan Turing Way, therefore approaching this junction from the north, the proposed hub and advertisements would be viewed before reaching the traffic lights. Due to a number of factors, including the set back of the installation from the edge of the carriageway; the distance between the proposed hub and the lights; and the straight and flat nature of this section of the highway, I find the proposal would not distract or confuse road users as they approach this junction.
26. Furthermore, the proposed freestanding installation would not obstruct road users' direct views of the traffic lights serving the lanes that allow vehicles to go straight or right at this junction.
27. However, on approach to this junction a left-lane emerges which allows vehicles to turn left. Traffic in this left lane is controlled by three traffic lights at the junction. Due to the highway layout and the hub's siting, it would not obscure direct views of the traffic light positioned closest to the central lanes.
28. Nonetheless, I observed that there would be a momentary period of time whereby the proposed hub would block the direct view of each of the other two traffic lights serving this left-turn lane as road users' approach. Whilst not ideal, I found that the blocking of this view would be for a short period of time only and as mentioned above the direct view of the third light for this lane would not be broken.
29. Additionally, I observed that there are moments upon approach where an existing lighting column and road sign also briefly block views of these two lights. I acknowledge that due to its width the proposed hub would obscure the view for slightly longer, nevertheless I still find that views of these lights are already partially obstructed upon approach by existing items.
30. Moreover, once a view of these lights is regained, I consider there would be enough distance and time for drivers to react between passing the hub and reaching the junction. I therefore do not find that the proposed hub would obstruct views of traffic

signals to an extent that would compromise highway safety as road users approach this junction from the north.

31. In terms of road users approaching this junction from other directions, due to the width of the carriageways and the distance between the proposed hub and the other entrance points to this junction, the proposal would not obscure views of any traffic signals or cause a distraction to road users.
32. I note that the Council have also raised concerns in respect of the proposal impeding pedestrian movements. Whilst I am cognisant to pedestrian movements in this area substantially increasing during events at the nearby stadia and arenas, the proposed hub would be positioned on a grass verge rather than any hard surfaced area used for walking.
33. Consequently, the proposal would not reduce the existing hard surfaced areas used by pedestrians and would not therefore result in a harmful impact upon pedestrian movements.
34. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to highway, pedestrian and public safety. The proposal therefore complies with the provisions of CS Policies DM1, SP1, T1 and EC5, UDP Policy DC15.2 and PfE Policy JP-P1 where they together seek, amongst other things, to provide opportunities for walking and cycling; ensure that areas are easy to move around for those of all mobility levels; and that development has regard to road, public and community safety. The proposal also accords with the provisions of the Framework where it states that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
35. In coming to my conclusion, I have also taken into consideration paragraph 141 of the Framework in so far as it is material in respect of its aim of controlling advertisements in the interests of public safety.

Other matters

36. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of allowed appeal decisions¹ for hubs and associated advertisements throughout the country. The Council has also referred to a dismissed appeal² for a large advertisement structure at 286 Ashton New Road. Whilst I have had due regard to these decisions, issues relating to the impact of a proposal upon the character, appearance and visual amenity of an area are matters of planning judgement based on the site-specific circumstances and surroundings.
37. In this regard, I have been provided with limited information in respect of these appeal decisions that would enable me to draw any direct comparisons with the appeal site and scheme before me. These decisions therefore carry limited weight in my determination of this appeal.
38. The appellant refers to the removal of the existing phone boxes at no. 46 Ravensbury Street and no. 167 Clarendon Road. The Council however state that the phone box at Clarendon Road has already been removed and this has not been disputed by the appellant.

¹ APP/Z5630/H/3209488; APP/N5090/Z/22/3296138; APP/N5090/d/22/3296141

² APP/B4215/Z/17/3184679

39. In any case, both these locations are not visible from the appeal site and their character is more residential. Thus, I find the appeal site and these locations are visually unrelated and not comparable. The potential benefits of the removal of these kiosks have therefore not factored into my determination of this appeal.

Conditions

40. The Council and the appellant have provided some suggested conditions for both appeals which I have considered against paragraph 57 of the Framework, and the advice contained in the PPG. I have edited the suggested conditions to improve precision and enforceability where necessary.
41. In Appeal A, in addition to the statutory time condition (1), a condition listing the approved drawings (2) is needed to ensure clarity of what has been permitted. I have also imposed a condition which requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the details included within the submitted supporting documents (3). This condition is necessary in the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development operates as per the submitted details.
42. I note that the Council suggested a condition be imposed that requires a verification report to be submitted to confirm compliance with the noise levels detailed within the submitted documents. However, provided that the requirements of condition (3) are adhered to a verification report is not necessary. This condition has therefore not been included.
43. In Appeal B, all advertisements granted express consent are subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations. In addition to these, to prevent visual intrusion it is necessary to apply conditions (1 & 2) to control the illumination of the advertisements so they do not stand out significantly from the background illumination in the street.
44. Conditions to ensure there are no moving images (3); the minimum display time is 10 seconds with the interval between successive displays being instantaneous and that the display will switch off in the event of a malfunction (4); and that no content on the display shall resemble a traffic sign (5), have been imposed. These are all necessary to avoid the risk of distraction to passers-by.
45. The appellant has suggested additional conditions be attached to Appeal B with respect to any advertisement being maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site, and that any advertisement hoarding or structure is to be kept in a condition which does not endanger the public. These suggested conditions however reflect two of the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations, which are automatically imposed, and therefore do not need to be repeated.
46. The Council has also suggested conditions that both Appeal A and Appeal B be granted temporary planning permission and advertisement consent for a period of 12 months due to ongoing regeneration works in the area. However, for the reasons given earlier I have found the proposed development to be acceptable, and it would not undermine the ongoing regeneration objectives of the wider area. As such, temporary planning permission and advertisement consent is not necessary to make the development acceptable, and these conditions have therefore not been imposed.

Conclusion

47. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, both Appeal A and Appeal B are allowed.

R Major

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

Appeal A Ref: APP/B4215/W/25/3369545

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Proposed Site Plan – 002 (Rev B)
 - Proposed Site Elevation – 004 (Rev B)
 - BT Street Hub Unit Dimensions
- 3) The development hereby approved shall be installed and maintained at all times thereafter in accordance with the details specified within the documents titled:
 - Street Hub Product Statement (V2.0, September 2024);
 - Street Hubs Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan (Version 3);
 - Street Hub Noise Management Plan (Version 2)

Appeal B Ref: APP/B4215/H/25/3369546

In addition to the five standard conditions in the Regulations:

- 1) In daylight hours, the intensity of the illuminance of the advertisements shall be controlled in order to reflect ambient light conditions (to ensure it is neither too bright or too dull), and shall at all times be no greater than the recommended maximum daytime luminance values (in cd/m²) set out in Table 10.5 within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide (PLG 05) 'Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (2023) (or its equivalent in a replacement guide).
- 2) In the hours of darkness (between dusk and dawn), the intensity of the illuminance of the advertisements shall be no greater than the maximum night-time luminance values (in cd/m²) set out in Table 10.4 within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide (PLG 05) 'Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (2023) (or its equivalent in a replacement guide).
- 3) The digital display screens shall not display any moving, or apparently moving, images (including animation, flashing, scrolling three dimensional, intermittent or video elements).
- 4) The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds. The interval between successive displays shall be instantaneous and the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays and the display will include a mechanism to switch to a blank screen with a black background in the event of a malfunction.

- 5) No content on the digital display screens shall resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

*****End of conditions*****