
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 August 2025 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3362843

Footpath Outside The Square, Hale Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 8ZN

- 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 (BT Group PLC) against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 115215/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/25/3362846

Footpath Outside The Square, Hale Road, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 8ZN

- 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 (BT Group PLC) against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 115216/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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Decision

1. Both appeals are dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. 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 Matter

3. Both appeals have the same description of development. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the hub unit and B to the refusal of advertisement consent for that element. I have dealt with the two schemes together, being distinct where necessary. In terms of appeal B, the Council has drawn my attention to relevant policies. I have taken them into account as material considerations as far as they are relevant to the main issues since the power to control advertisements may be exercised in the interest of amenity and public safety only.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area. This relates to amenity for the purposes of the aforementioned regulations.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises part of the pavement outside a supermarket. While the surrounding area features shops and similar uses, the extent of the commercial area is of a limited scale and seems to serve the local area. The pavement is mostly open and where there is street furniture it is limited to bus stops, bollards, waste bins, cycle loops and streetlamps. Advertisements are typically modest in scale and associated with the shops including fascia signs, projecting signs and A boards. Although there are some larger advertisements, they tend to be attached to buildings and do not appear overtly illuminated. Overall, the furniture and advertisements in the area have a discreet presence which is reflective of the small-scale local shopping area in which the appeal site is located.
6. Although the street hub would be slender, due to its considerable height and width together with its utilitarian design, it would have a stark and monolithic presence. Despite its modern appearance, it would be very conspicuous compared to the smaller scale of other street furniture. Furthermore, the large and illuminated digital screens on either side would appear excessive in comparison to the generally subdued advertisements in the area and would further draw the eye of passers-by. The proposal would therefore be an overly prominent and incongruous feature in the street scene and would unacceptably jar with the more restrained context.
7. There is a freestanding advertisement at the entrance to The Square. However, this has a subdued appearance due to its mostly monochrome colour. It is also clearly associated with the shops nearby and is setback from the highway which contributes to its discreetness. In contrast, the street hub unit would be obvious due to its prominent location, size, illumination and position adjacent the highway.
8. The proposal is said to facilitate the removal of two existing kiosks located elsewhere. However, the evidence before me does not indicate how close the existing kiosks are to the appeal site, and they were not readily apparent in the area on my site visit. Moreover, the photographs provided demonstrate that the existing kiosks to be removed are of an altogether different design to the appeal proposal. I am not led to recommending allowing the appeal in this light.
9. The cited appeal decisions seem to be from different locations around the country and do not appear to be close to the appeal site. Furthermore, the evidence before me does not clearly demonstrate that the context is similar or that these examples are directly relevant to the appeal proposal. They do not therefore set a precedent.
10. The proposal could provide free wi-fi access, improved connectivity, access to public services, accessibility and wayfinding options and provision of USB ports for device charging as well as free direct phone calls to the emergency services and charities. The hub would be powered by renewable carbon-free energy, be inspected weekly, cleaned at least every two weeks and monitored 24/7. It would be able to display community and emergency awareness messages and have environmental sensors to measure air quality, noise and traffic, providing the Council with free advertising hours, and supporting local businesses.

11. There is support for high quality communications infrastructure proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan. Despite this, while there is a need for such proposals and they can have social and economic benefits as outlined by the appellant, these factors amount to no more than a modest level of benefit and do not outweigh the harm identified under the main issue.
12. With regards to appeal A, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan (2024), which requires that proposals are well integrated and respect the character and identity of the locality. For appeal B, the advertisement would have a harmful effect on the amenity of the area, failing an assessment under the above regulations.

Other Matters

13. The appeal site is located near to the Hale Chapel Sunday School and Schoolmaster's House, which is a grade II listed building. The effect of the proposal on its setting is not in dispute. With regards to appeal A which seeks planning permission, Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) sets out that special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting.
14. Having considered the significance of the listed building, its distance from the appeal site and the very localised harm of the proposal, I am satisfied that its setting would be preserved. The absence of harm in relation to this, the living conditions of local residents and highway safety are neutral factors which do not weigh in support of the proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above, I recommend that both appeal A and B should be dismissed given they would result in conflict with the development plan with material considerations not indicating a decision other than in accordance therewith, and there would be failure of an assessment under the aforementioned regulations respectively.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR