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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 November 2025

**by R Lawrence BSc (Hons), PGDip (TP), MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 10 December 2025**

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### **Appeal A Ref: APP/C5690/W/25/3368550**

#### **Pavement o/s Civic Suite, Catford Road, London SE6 4RU**

- 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 Mr Simon Warner of BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref is DC/25/139355.
- The development proposed is the installation of 1 no. new BT Street Hub with 2 no. integrated advertisement displays.

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### **Appeal B Ref: APP/C5690/H/25/3368551**

#### **Pavement o/s Civic Suite, Catford Road, London SE6 4RU**

- 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 Mr Simon Warner of BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lewisham.
- The application Ref is DC/25/139356.
- The advertisement proposed is the display of 2 no. digital advertisement within a BT Street Hub.

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## Decisions

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of 1 no. new BT Street Hub with 2 no. integrated advertisement displays at Pavement o/s Civic Suite, Catford Road, London SE6 4RU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/25/139355, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 2 no. digital advertisement within a BT Street Hub at Pavement o/s Civic Suite, Catford Road, London SE6 4RU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/25/139356. 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. I have used the addresses from the decision notices in the headings above, as they provide a more detailed description of the location than those on the submitted application forms. I note that the same approach has been adopted in the submitted appeal forms.
4. The description of development refers to the removal of BT payphones; however, there are no payphones within the appeal site. While I note the intention to remove payphones elsewhere, these locations fall outside the site and no clear plans have been provided. I have therefore adopted the Council's descriptions of development, omitting reference to payphone removal and have considered the appeals on this basis.

5. The two appeals before me relate to the refusal of planning permission for the BT street hub (Appeal A), and the refusal of advertisement consent for the two integrated digital advertisements (Appeal B). Although I have considered each proposal on its individual merits, the reasons for refusal in both cases are essentially the same. Accordingly, I have addressed both appeals together within a single decision letter.
6. In relation to Appeal B, Regulation 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 states that a Local Planning Authority shall exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.
7. Since the relevant applications for the above appeals were determined, the Council adopted its Local Plan on 16 July 2025 (LP). This replaces the Core Strategy policies (2011) and the Development Management policies (2014) which no longer form part of the development plan. The main parties were invited to provide comments on the new LP in relation to their cases. I have had regard to the comments received in my determination of these appeals.

## **Main Issues**

8. The two main issues are the effect of the Street Hub and advertisement displays on:
  - public safety, including in relation to bus operations and pedestrian movement, and
  - the character and appearance of the public realm and wider streetscape.

## **Reasons**

### *Public safety*

9. The appeal site is located on Catford Road, a wide carriageway with multiple lanes, subject to red route restrictions, and incorporating a bus lane. It is set back from a bus stop serving several bus routes and lies close to the junctions with Rushey Green and Bromley Road. The footway on either side of the carriageway is of generous width and accommodates a high volume of pedestrian traffic alongside existing street furniture. This context provides a robust and well-managed transport corridor designed to support both vehicular and pedestrian movement.
10. I have carefully considered the concerns raised by the Council and Transport for London (TfL) regarding the potential for bright illumination and changing displays to distract drivers, as well as the risk of obscuring views of pedestrians, including passengers waiting at the bus stop.
11. The proposed advertisements would be internally illuminated and positioned to face oncoming traffic in both directions, close to the kerb. This siting reduces the likelihood of drivers turning away from the road to view the screens. The hub would be orientated within drivers' sight lines and placed close to the kerb, which accords with Transport for London guidance<sup>1</sup> and minimises any risk of distraction, including for bus drivers approaching the stop.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance for Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice, 4 March 2013, Transport for London

12. Illumination levels, automatic screen dimming and the frequency of display changes could be controlled by condition to prevent undue glare. These measures would ensure that brightness remains appropriate and that the displays do not compromise driver attention.
13. From my observations on site, the hub would be located towards the start of the bus stop markings but at a good distance from the stop itself. This positioning allows sufficient clearance even when multiple buses are present. The gentle curve of the road at this point provides ample visibility for drivers to observe the bus stop ahead and for passengers to see approaching buses. Given this, there is no evidence before me that the hub would obstruct passengers boarding or alighting, including when two buses pull in simultaneously. The separation between the hub and the bus stop ensures that pedestrian movement and bus operations would remain safe and efficient.
14. The proposal would maintain a clear footway width in the region of 3.6 metres, exceeding the minimum 3.3 metres recommended for busy town centres within TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London. This ensures that pedestrian movement would remain unimpeded and that the footway would continue to function effectively for high volumes of foot traffic. The remaining space would provide a good proportion of unencumbered footway, supporting safe and comfortable pedestrian flow. This directly aligns with Healthy Streets indicators referenced in Policy T2 of the London Plan (2021) such as "Pedestrians from all walks of life" and "People feel relaxed", as the design ensures inclusive access and avoids creating pinch points or congestion.
15. The hub's siting and design also support the indicator "People choose to walk and cycle", as the proposal would not compromise the attractiveness or safety of the walking environment. By consolidating multiple functions into a single structure, the scheme reduces the need for additional street furniture, as it avoids unnecessary obstacles and maintains clear sightlines across the street. The presence of wayfinding and connectivity features within the hub further promotes sustainable travel choices, supporting the Council's objectives for Healthy Streets.
16. With regard to installation and servicing, these activities would be temporary and, given the modest scale of the proposal, there is no evidence that they could not be managed effectively. Established highway controls already regulate works on or near the highway through permit systems and traffic management plans. These measures ensure safe pedestrian routes, clear signage, and coordination to minimise disruption. Taken together, they provide a robust framework for managing installation and servicing without compromising highway or public safety.
17. Taking these factors into account, I find no substantive evidence that the proposal would result in harm to highway or public safety, including in relation to bus operations and pedestrian movement. The siting and design of the hub would maintain safe and efficient use of the footway and carriageway and would not conflict with the Council's objectives for Healthy Streets or sustainable travel.
18. Accordingly, I conclude that Appeal A would accord with Policy TR3 and QD3 of the LP and Policies D8, T2 and T4 of the London Plan (2021). These policies, taken together and insofar as relevant, seek to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety, encourage walking and public transport, and ensure that development does not increase road danger or compromise transport operations. Appeal B would also

comply with these policies insofar as they relate to advertisements and public safety.

### *Character and appearance*

19. The appeal site lies within a busy, transient setting dominated by transport infrastructure, with a varied backdrop of building styles. Traditional red brick buildings sit alongside more modern forms of development, creating a mixed character. Existing advertising is already present in the area, including bus panels, lamp post signage, and shop frontages visible in the distance. The public realm is generally well-lit, owing to bus stop signage, lighting from nearby shops and takeaways, and regular street lights.
20. The multi-functional purpose of the hub, which would include wayfinding, device charging, phone calls and ultrafast wi-fi, aligns with principle 4 of the Lewisham Streetscape Guide (2011), which encourages a reduction in street clutter. By consolidating several functions into a single structure, the proposal would reduce the need for multiple items of street furniture, supporting a more efficient and organised streetscape.
21. Within this context, the introduction of a modern street hub would integrate visually with its surroundings. The generous pavement width and separation from neighbouring buildings would ensure that the hub's size and scale would maintain a sense of openness and spaciousness along the footway. Its position close to the kerb would accord with TfL's Streetscape Guidance (2022), which advises that street furniture is best placed within a furniture zone adjacent to the kerb. This siting would also align with other examples of street furniture on that side of Catford Road, primarily comprising streetlamps, waste bins and signage. The hub would not appear unduly prominent, and the open character of the street would be retained. Furthermore, the hub would be sufficiently separated from existing street furniture to avoid any perception of clutter.
22. Its modern design and dark materials would complement the colour and design of other street furniture in the area, allowing it to integrate into its surroundings. In terms of advertisements, there is already a presence of both illuminated and non-illuminated advertisements nearby, particularly bus stop signage and shop fronts. Given this, and the well-lit nature of the area, the contrast between the advertisements and their surroundings would be minimal. I find that the illuminated advertisements would not appear out of place or cause visual harm.
23. The Broadway Theatre on Rushey Green, a Grade II listed building of architectural and historic significance, is recognisable as an example of an Art Deco civic theatre. In accordance with the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have given special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. The theatre is well separated from the appeal site, with intervening built form. Given this separation, the modest scale of the proposed hub relative to the theatre, and the predominantly modern character of the surrounding area, I find that the setting of the Broadway Theatre would not be harmed by the appeal schemes.
24. Taking these factors into account, the proposed development would not result in unnecessary street clutter. Its siting, scale, and design would respect the existing character of the public realm, maintain openness, and avoid harm to the setting of the listed Broadway Theatre. Accordingly, the proposals would be acceptable in

terms of their effect on the character and appearance of the public realm and wider streetscape.

25. Appeal A would therefore accord with Policies D8 and T2 of the London Plan (2021), and policies insofar as they relate to the character of the area and visual amenity. Taken together, these policies require, amongst other matters, that proposals are well-designed, contribute to an attractive public realm, and that street furniture complements the use and function of the space. Appeal B would also comply with these policies insofar as they relate to advertisements and visual amenity. There would also be compliance with the Framework, in particular section 12, which seeks development of a high quality that respects the local context.

### **Conditions**

26. The Council has not provided a list of suggested conditions. However, I have had regard to its comments on maximum luminance levels, as well as the set of conditions suggested by TfL. I have considered these against paragraph 57 of the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. Where necessary, I have edited and merged conditions to improve precision, clarity and enforceability.
27. For Appeal A, in addition to the statutory time condition, a condition listing the approved drawings is required to ensure clarity on what has been permitted. The same applies to Appeal B.
28. In Appeal B, all advertisements granted express consent are subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations. Beyond these, I have imposed additional conditions to ensure that highway and public safety is not compromised. Specifically, it is necessary to control the level of illumination and the frequency of change of display of the proposed advertisements, and to restrict other visual effects that could cause distraction to drivers.
29. In respect of luminance levels, whilst the maximum levels proposed by the Council and TfL during hours of darkness are below the recommended limits set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Professional Lighting Guide 05, I consider that a more stringent restriction is justified. This reflects the busy nature of the area, the proximity of the bus stop, and the need for drivers to exercise greater care.
30. Accordingly, I have imposed a condition requiring luminance levels to be capped at a level lower than the ILP maximum during hours of darkness, to ensure public and highway safety.
31. An additional condition has been proposed to restrict activities on the highway, specifically concerning the footpath and adjacent carriageway, and to require compliance with existing restrictions such as parking. This seems intended to reinforce adherence to current regulations and legislation rather than introduce new or additional controls. I have no reason to believe that the existing regulations and powers are inadequate to manage the matters the condition seeks to address. On that basis, the condition does not meet the test of necessity and cannot be justified.

### **Conclusion**

32. For the above reasons, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that Appeal A should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, Appeal A is dismissed.

33. In respect of Appeal B, for the reasons given above, the proposal would be detrimental to public safety. Appeal B is therefore also dismissed.

*R. Lawrence*

INSPECTOR

## **Schedule of conditions**

### **Appeal A**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 001 Rev A (site location plan) 002 Rev A (proposed site plan) and 003 Rev A (existing and proposed elevations).

### **Appeal B**

- 1) The advertisement hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 001 Rev A (site location plan) 002 Rev A (proposed site plan) and 003 Rev A (existing and proposed elevations).
- 2) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisements permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 300 cd/m<sup>2</sup> between dusk and dawn, and at any other time shall be controlled in order to reflect ambient light conditions and shall be no greater than the recommended maximum daytime luminance levels set out in Table 10.5 within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (for a sign within Zone E4) in its Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG 05) Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (or its equivalent in a replacement Guide).
- 3) The approved display should contain at all times a feature that will turn off the screen (i.e. show a black screen) in the event that the display experiences a malfunction or error.
- 4) There shall be a smooth uninterrupted transition from one static image to another with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images. No individual advertisement shall be displayed for a duration of less than 10 seconds.
- 5) There shall be no flashing imagery in the display at any time. No individual advertisement on the digital screen shall contain moving images, animation, intermittent or full motion video images, or any images that resemble road signs or traffic signs.

**\*\*End of schedule\*\***