



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q4625/W/25/3369321

Pavement o/s 19-21 Mell Square, Mill Lane, Solihull B91 3AR

- 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 Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/00762/PPFL.
 - The proposed development is described as: 'The installation of a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display'.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/Q4625/H/25/3369322

Pavement o/s 19-21 Mell Square, Mill Lane, Solihull B91 3AR

- 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 Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/00763/ADV.
 - The proposed advertisement is described as: 'The installation of a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display'.
-

Decision Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. In the heading above, I have taken the description of development from the application form, but I have removed superfluous text in the interests of conciseness.
4. There are two appeals on this site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission for the proposed communication hub including defibrillator, while Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for advertisement on the same communication hub. I have considered each on its individual merits. As they raise same issues, I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated, to avoid duplication.
5. In respect of Appeal B, the Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) both make it clear that advertisements should be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account

cumulative impacts. Therefore, while I have taken relevant policy of the Solihull Local Plan (2013) into account as a material consideration, it has not been determinative.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of the proposal on amenities, with particular regard to the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The site is located on the pedestrianised area, which links to the Mell Square, of Solihull Town Centre. The surrounding area contains various types of street furniture, including lighting columns, wayfinding stand, and seating benches. Owing to the modest scale of these elements, the area remains relatively uncluttered, thus providing clear and open views. This open and uncluttered character makes a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposal is for the installation of a freestanding, upright communication hub positioned centrally within the pedestrianised area. The hub would be of a contemporary design and finished in a dark colour. Although the hub would be narrow in width, its excessive height and overall volume represent a disproportionate massing when compared to the existing, modestly scaled street furniture. As a result, it would result in an incongruous and overly dominant feature in the street scene. Furthermore, due to its prominent central location, it would consequently erode the valued quality of uncluttered character that presently contributes positively to the overall character and appearance of the area.
9. In respect of Appeal B, the proposal would incorporate an illuminated LCD screen on one side of the hub, displaying static content. Whilst the proposal would incorporate an automatic night-time switch-off and a light sensor for adjusting light levels, the proposed display screen nonetheless would represent a significant and a visually prominent addition within the street scene. Although a variety of advertisements feature on existing shopfronts, the introduction of this large, centrally positioned, illuminated display would detract from the visual amenity of the area.
10. The appellant contends that the size of the proposed advertisement is comparable to that displayed on bus shelters. However, advertisements displayed on bus shelters are normally secondary to the functional purpose of the shelter within the transport network. Therefore, I do not find them directly comparable to the appeal proposal.
11. For the reasons set out above, the appeal proposal would harm the amenities of the area, with specific regard to the character and appearance of the area.
12. The proposal would provide a range of interactive free functions to members of the public. It would also incorporate a publicly accessible defibrillator and provide instant access to the emergency services. I give these public benefits limited weight due to the scale of the proposal.
13. I note that the proposed facility would be finished with anti-vandal materials and it would also be run on renewable energy and cleaned by rainwater. The operation of the unit is also formulated with the support of the Metropolitan Police Design

Out Crime Unit to ensure that the use of the unit is monitored and managed to prevent abuse. However these benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have found.

14. Consequently, in respect of Appeal A, I conclude that the proposed communication hub including defibrillator, in this regard, would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy P15 of the Solihull Local Plan 2013, which amongst other matters, seek a good quality design for new developments and conserve and enhance local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality of the area.
15. In respect of Appeal B, I also conclude that the proposed advertisement would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the area. The policies of the development plan have been considered as far as they are material.

Conclusion

Appeal A

16. I have found that the proposal would harm amenity contrary to the development plan and the aims of Paragraph 141 of the Framework, and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Appeal B

17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

O Tresise

INSPECTOR