
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 November 2025

by **M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/H5960/W/25/3365756

Pavement o/s 95 St John's Hill, London SW11 1SY

- 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 Nathan Still, Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0219.
 - The development proposed is a multifunctional communication Hub including defibrillator and advertisement display, as illustrated in the attached documentation.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/H5960/H/25/3365757

Pavement o/s 95 St John's Hill, London SW11 1SY

- 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 Nathan Still, Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0230.
 - The development proposed is a multifunctional communication Hub including defibrillator and advertisement display, as illustrated in the attached documentation.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A Ref: APP/H5960/W/25/3365756, is dismissed.
2. Appeal B Ref: APP/H5960/H/25/3365757, is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Council determined the appeal scheme as two separate applications, one for the proposed communication hub unit (Appeal A) and the other for the proposed advertisement display (Appeal B) and accordingly issued two separate decision notices.
4. Both appeals relate to the same site and to each other. I have considered each on its individual merits, but as they raise similar issues and to avoid duplication, I have dealt with them in a single decision letter.

Main Issues

5. Regarding Appeal A, the main issues are the effect of the proposed communication hub on the character and appearance of the area and highway safety.
6. Regarding Appeal B, the main issues are the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity and public safety.

Reasons

Background

7. The site of these appeals is a section of pavement along St John's Hill.
8. The proposed 'communication hub' is a standalone installation. In addition to facilitating free calls to landlines, this offers additional connective functions that includes free Wi-Fi, USB and wireless device charging, a 32inch touch screen to enable wayfinding, direct access to local webpages and a 24/7 publicly accessible defibrillator. The communication hub includes a larger advertisement display on one side.
9. The communication hub would measure approximately 1338mm in width, 317mm in depth (with the protective canopy projecting a further 600mm), and 2630mm in overall height. It would occupy a footprint of around 0.50m². The structure would be finished in powder-coated aluminium (black or grey), with an LCD display panel set behind toughened, laminated safety glass.

Character and appearance

10. The stretch of St John's Hill where the appeal site is located is lined predominantly with three-storey period terrace buildings with many featuring traditional timber shopfronts at ground floor level. Collectively, these elements create a commercial but attractive shopping environment and reinforce the established traditional character of the townscape.
11. In this case, the appeal site lies outside but between the St John's Hill Grove Conservation Area ('CA') and Clapham Junction CA. The former is characterised by modest three-storey terraces with traditional shopfronts, tree-lined streets, while the latter contains larger-scale buildings. However, a common feature of these Conservation Areas and the location of the appeal site is tree-lined streets and minimal visual clutter.
12. The Framework requires me to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).
13. Most notably, the St John's Hill Grove CA (begins at the corner of Plough Terrace and St John's Hill. The St John's Hill Grove Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy identifies views both into and out of the CA along St John's Hill towards Clapham Junction passing over the appeal site as being particularly important to its special interest. Although the appeal site lies outside the St Johns Hill Grove CA, the experience of the street scene is similar, with three-storey terraced buildings featuring ground-floor shopfronts. Positive characteristics of the St Johns Hill Grove CA include the traditional appearance of these shopfronts and a generally attractive streetscape defined by tree planting and limited visual clutter or illumination.
14. By contrast, negative elements in the wider area include bollards and illumination from advertisement signage, such as the bus stop further along from the appeal site, all of which are visible from within the St Johns Hill Grove CA. As the appeal site forms part of a key view along St John's Hill and can be readily experienced from the St Johns Hill Grove CA, it falls within the setting of this CA.

15. Notably, near the appeal site, street furniture is limited, the lighting columns, street tree and occasional wayfinder totems, are tall slender features that sit comfortably within the streetscape and do not intrude upon views at ground level. Similarly, the nearby street bins are modest, low-profile elements whose scale and placement preserve the openness and visual quality of the area.
16. In this context, the visually open nature of the appeal site is a positive factor to the setting of the St Johns Hill Grove CA.
17. The proposed communication hub would sit between a wayfinder totem and a lighting column. Owing to its sizeable scale due to its considerable width and height, contemporary design and resulting visually assertive form, it would appear conspicuous and intrusive, introducing a bulky modern element that disrupts the established rhythm of modest, traditional street furniture and contributes to visual clutter within the streetscape.
18. Its proximity to the existing slender lighting column would further emphasise its dominance. The communication hub's scale would erode the current sense of openness, undermining the simple and cohesive character that presently defines the area.
19. When viewed along St John's Hill, the introduction of a large, modern structure into a streetscape characterised by historic form and architectural consistency would appear markedly out of place. Its presence would draw attention away from the established rhythm and character of the surrounding townscape. Thereby diminishing the architectural quality and setting of the nearby conservation area and its significance.
20. The harm the proposal would cause to the setting and significance of the St Johns Hill Grove CA would be less than substantial. The Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
21. As set out in the Framework that despite finding the harm to be less than substantial, I still attach great weight to this. Such harm can be outweighed by public benefits. However, the benefits in this instance¹, in particular from the single communication hub would be limited and do not outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified.
22. Accordingly, I find that the proposal conflicts with Policy D3 of the London Plan, which, among other requirements, expects development to respond to the existing character of an area by identifying the special and valued features that are unique to the locality, and by respecting, enhancing, and utilising the heritage assets and architectural qualities that contribute to local character. I also find conflict with the similar aims of the Framework regarding heritage assets and their settings, which seek to ensure that development preserves or enhances their significance.
23. For the above reasons, the communication hub would harm the character and appearance of the area and fails to accord with policies LP1 and LP22 of the Wandsworth Local Plan (2023) ('LP') and policy D8 of the London Plan. Together, these policies aim to secure high-quality, well-designed places and public realm

¹ Appendix C - Appellant's Statement of Case

that respond positively to local character; Support the installation of required utility and digital connectivity apparatus, where amongst other things this does not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area, minimise its visual impact on the street scene, camouflaging its appearance wherever possible, and must not lead to an over accumulation of visual clutter; and do not create road safety hazards.

Visual amenity

24. As already noted, the stretch of road alongside the appeal site has a distinctly commercial character, with shopfront advertisements such as fascias, projecting signs and window displays. However, these advertisements are generally contained within the building façades rather than appearing as freestanding features within the pavement or detached from other street furniture. In addition, the signage typically takes the form of painted or applied lettering, and where illumination is present it is subtle and visually restrained.
25. While I am aware that the wider area contains other communication hubs and bus shelters incorporating advertisement panels, the hubs are noticeably smaller in scale, and the panels on bus shelters are visually absorbed into the larger structure. As a result, neither form of advertisement is as prominent nor visually assertive as the proposed display.
26. In contrast, the advertisement panel would occupy a large section of the wider structure and, owing to its considerable size, would form a prominent and visually assertive element. Its freestanding position, further emphasised by illumination, would heighten its presence within the street scene. The combined effect would be a visually intrusive addition that disrupts the established character of the townscape, diminishing its attractive qualities and resulting in clear harm to visual amenity.
27. For the above reasons, the proposed advertisement would harm the visual amenity of the area. In accordance with the Regulations, I have also taken into account the provision of the development plan as far as it is material.

Highway safety

28. St Johns Hill is used by pedestrians and other users. The pavement at this location is notably wide at 5.34m, and even with the introduction of the communications hub, generous clearances of 3.4m on the building-side and 0.6m to the kerb would be retained. In a busy urban environment, a remaining unobstructed width of over 3m is substantial and ensures that pedestrian desire lines would not be impeded.
29. The proposed hub would be positioned within an existing cluster of street furniture, where the footway already accommodates fixed elements without hindering pedestrian movement. Furthermore, its siting and spacing would not obstruct the wayfinder totem, which is intended to be read at close range and would remain fully visible and accessible from all directions.
30. Consequently, the proposal would not compromise highway safety. Accordingly, I find no conflict with LP Policy LP49 and London Plan Policy T2, which amongst other things support proposals that reduce the need to travel and will work to promote safe, sustainable and accessible transport solutions for all users and create safer, more pleasant, people-focused streets.

Public safety

31. The proposed advertisement display would be visible to pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the highway. Based on my findings on highway safety and because the illuminance, the display time of an advertisement and intervals between advertisements can be controlled by conditions, I am not persuaded that the proposed advertisement raises any significant public safety concerns in this particular location.
32. Therefore, the proposed advertisement display would not harm public safety. In accordance with the Regulations, I have also taken into account the provision of the development plan as far as it is material.

Other Matters

33. I acknowledge that advertisements are part of commercial areas and can contribute to vitality and could be utilised to promote initiatives for the benefit of the public. Also, the proposed communication hub and the services this offers, including a defibrillator would be further benefits associated with the proposal. Nevertheless, such benefits arising from a single unit would be modest.
34. The Framework identifies that an advanced, high quality and reliable communication infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. It also seeks to support the expansion of electronic communications networks. However, these considerations are not without regard to the Framework as a whole and this is only of limited weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusions

35. In respect of Appeal A, although the proposed communication hub would not harm highway safety, this would harm the character and appearance of the area and the setting of a heritage asset.
36. Appeal A – I have taken account of the potential benefits of the proposal detailed by the appellant, and the support given elsewhere and by the Framework for high quality and reliable communications infrastructure, in supporting economic growth and social well-being. However, and although I attach considerable weight to the support and benefits identified for the proposal, these do not outweigh the significant harm that I have found arising from the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the setting of a heritage asset.
37. For Appeal B, I have found that although the proposed advertisement would not harm public safety, this would harm visual amenity and therefore would be unacceptable.
38. For the above reasons, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR