



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 December 2025

by **R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/N2345/W/25/3373407

Footpath outside 120 Friargate, Preston PR1 2EE

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref is 06/2025/0675.
 - 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/N2345/H/25/3373408

Footpath outside 120 Friargate, Preston PR1 2EE

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref is 06/2025/0674.
 - 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. 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 120 Friargate, Preston PR1 2EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 06/2025/0675, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.
2. Appeal B is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at Footpath outside 120 Friargate, Preston PR1 2EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 06/2025/0674. 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. For both appeals, I have taken the address in the banner heading and decision above from the decision notice rather than from the description provided on the application form as it corresponds with the information provided on the plans. It is also the first part of the address used on both appeal forms; however, the second part incorrectly refers to Avenham.
4. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed BT Street Hub unit ('the Street Hub'). Appeal B relates to the refusal of advertisement

consent for the two digital illuminated advertisement screens which would be an integral part of the hub proposed in Appeal A. I have combined the appeals into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues, however I have considered each on its individual merits.

5. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 ('the Regulations') stipulate that control may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken into account the development plan policies referred to by the Council, they have not been determinative in respect of Appeal B. The Council has confirmed that the decision notice for Appeal B contained an error, referring to Policy EN8 rather than Policy EN9 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies) (DMP) (2015).
6. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst broad changes to the structure of the Framework are proposed as part of this consultation, these proposals could be subject to further change and can only be given very limited weight at this stage. It has therefore not been necessary to consult the parties on the changes, and in reaching my decision, I have had regard to the Framework published in December 2024.

Main Issues

7. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
8. The Council has not suggested the proposal would affect public safety, and based on the submissions and my site visit, I have no reason to form a different view. Therefore, the main issue in respect of Appeal B is the effect of the proposal on amenity.

Reasons

9. The appeal site forms part of a recently pedestrianised area on the northern side of Friargate. This section of Friargate is to the north-west of the ringway and is well-used by pedestrians as it links the main shopping areas of Preston with the University of Lancashire campus. The surrounding area is mixed-use, but Friargate is distinctly vibrant and commercial in its character, comprising predominantly shops, restaurant and takeaway uses at ground floor with various illuminated fascia and hanging advertisements and signage.
10. The appeal proposal would remove an existing BT payphone on the same side of Friargate and erect a Street Hub with advertisement panels on either side. It would be an upstanding, rectangular structure and would house features that provide ultrafast public Wi-Fi, free phone calls and access to emergency services and other facilities. In recent years, extensive public realm improvement works have been undertaken along Friargate, and the amount of street furniture and street clutter has been reduced. The removal of the BT payphone, which could be secured by condition, would ensure that the proposed Street Hub would not result in an overall increase or proliferation of street furniture in the area.
11. Existing street furniture is contemporary and well-designed, comprising benches, bins, cycle stands and lighting columns. It is typically sited within a defined,

relatively narrow strip of paving either side of Friargate. The Street Hub would broadly align with other street furniture within the strip of paving on the northern side of Friargate, thereby reducing the extent and spread of any visual clutter. Moreover, it would be sited further away from the shopfronts than the BT payphone it would replace, which would improve pedestrian visibility of the closest shop and restaurant units and ensure that access to them is not blocked.

12. The submission also details that an existing BT payphone outside 185 Lancaster Road N would be removed. This payphone is located a significant distance away and it is visually unrelated to the appeal site. The potential benefits of its removal have not therefore been determinative to this appeal.
13. In close-by views from Friargate, the proposed Street Hub would be noticeably taller and wider than the existing BT payphone and most other street furniture. However, in longer views in either direction along Friargate, the Street Hub would not appear excessive in its proportions, viewed alongside predominantly three-storey buildings and other vertical features, such as the lighting columns and street trees. It would appear a modern, purpose-designed unit which would have a simple form and slender proportions which would complement the design and materials of the existing street furniture. Consequently, it would not cause harm to the attractiveness or undermine the improvements made to the public realm. Furthermore, its simple design would be unlikely to lead to issues of anti-social behaviour, a concern cited by an interested party.
14. The illuminated digital displays on either side of the Street Hub would increase its prominence within the street scene. However, this part of Friargate is characterised by signage and advertising and given the mix of restaurant and takeaway uses, these are likely to be illuminated into the evenings. Given this, and subject to conditions to control levels, there would be no harm to visual amenity from the size, position and illumination of the displays.
15. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area. Consequently, there would be no conflict with DMP policies EN7 and EP9 and Policy SP1 of the Preston City Centre Plan (2016). Together, these seek high-quality design which makes a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area, minimises impact on visual amenity and reduces visual clutter within the public realm, including the co-ordination and careful design of street furniture, materials and signage.

Conditions

16. 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 Planning Practice Guidance. I have edited the suggested conditions to improve precision and enforceability where necessary.
17. In Appeal A, in addition to the statutory time condition, a condition listing the approved drawings is necessary in the interests of clarity and certainty. The 'BT Street Hub Product Statement' describes the materials which would be used, but these are not shown on the plans. To ensure a high-quality design and appearance, it is therefore necessary to impose a condition requiring this specification to be followed.

18. A condition requiring the removal of the existing BT phone box adjacent the appeal site within three months of the commencement of development is necessary to ensure there would be no excess street clutter along this side of Friargate.
19. 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 to control the illumination of the advertisements, so they do not stand out significantly from other advertisements and signage along Friargate.
20. Both parties have suggested conditions to ensure there are no moving images, the minimum display time is 10 seconds, the interval between successive displays is instantaneous and no content on the display shall resemble a traffic sign. However, as Friargate is predominantly pedestrianised, these controls are not necessary in the interests of avoiding risk of distraction to vehicles. Nevertheless, it is necessary in the interests of visual amenity, to impose a condition requiring the display to freeze an image in the event of a malfunction.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B are allowed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

Appeal A Ref: APP/N2345/W/25/3373407

- 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 (dwg. No.002 Rev A).

Proposed Site Elevation (dwg. No.004 Rev A).

Street Hub Dimensioned Elevations (dwg. No.STH-001).
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials and finishes specified in the BT Street Hub Product Statement v2.1 February 2025.
- 4) Within three (3) months of development commencing, the existing BT payphone indicated for removal on the Proposed Site Plan (dwg. No.002 Rev A), shall be removed in its entirety and the land made good to the same condition as the adjacent land.

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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 within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 'The 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 value (in cd/m²) set out within the Institution of Lighting Professionals - Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays' (2023) (or its equivalent in a replacement guide).
- 3) The approved display screens should at all times include a mechanism to freeze the image in the event of a malfunction.

End of Schedule