



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 November 2025

by K Dryden BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: 6001204

Outside 782 Finchley Road, London NW11 7TH

- 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 Barnet.
- The application ref is 25/2758/FUL.
- The development proposed is the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/N5090/Z/25/3374827

Outside 782 Finchley Road, London NW11 7TH

- 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 Barnet.
- The application ref is 25/2759/ADV.
- The advertisement proposed is the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same site and to each other. I have considered each on its individual merits, but I have combined these cases into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise the same issues.
4. The description of the proposal in the banner heading for Appeal B is taken from the application form. However, the Council has described the proposal as 'two digital internally illuminated, intermittent, double sided display screens to BT street hub'. As this is a more accurate description, I have determined the appeal on the basis of it.
5. In respect of Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken account of the policies the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

6. The Council has raised no objection in respect of public safety or aural amenity and based on my observations at the site visit and the evidence provided, I have no reason to take a different view. The main issue in dispute is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeals relate to a section of public footway on the Finchley Road, close to the junction with Temple Fortune Lane. The area is predominantly commercial at ground floor with mixed commercial and residential over two upper storeys. The local area includes attractive, red brick and rendered buildings in the arts and crafts garden city suburb style which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
8. A bus shelter with illuminated advertisement panel and existing street furniture including a bench, litter bin and lamp post are situated in close proximity to the proposal. From the evidence provided and observations at my site visit, an existing payphone has been removed from the appeal site. A telephone booth with illuminated digital panel is sited on the opposite side of the Finchley Road. Whilst there are exceptions as referenced above, advertisement signage in the locality generally consists of modestly sized fascia signage that are proportionate to the scale of the shopfronts, with a limited number of projecting signs.
9. Whilst the street hub would be sited on a wide area of public footway, the size and height of the proposed advertisements within their associated structure would appear excessive and visually intrusive in this location. The height of the street hub unit would be consistent with the lower fascia signage height at 782 Finchley Road and would therefore dominate the setting of the adjacent building and the adjoining terrace of properties. Furthermore, with regard to materials, the use of a black, powder coated aluminium exterior finish would appear visually oppressive and discordant within the street scene.
10. The proposal would be sited near the highway edge of the footway and consequently would appear unduly prominent within the street scene. Given the substantial size of the street hub structure, combined with its proposed double-sided illuminated display screens, the proposal would be clearly visible in long vistas along both sides of the Finchley Road, thereby resulting in a conspicuous and incongruous feature that would undermine the established character of the area.
11. The appellant has referenced approved advertisement and planning applications for an electric vehicle charging point with double sided LCD screen which has yet to be constructed, in addition to a telephone booth with internally illuminated digital panel, sited on the opposite side of the Finchley Road. The double-sided advertising screen on the bus shelter adjacent to the site has also been cited as evidence of existing digital signage in the local area. Whilst it is accepted that there are existing digital display signs in the locality, the proposal would introduce a more intrusive form of digital advertising due to its prominent siting, excessive scale, materials and illumination.
12. I have had regard to the Barnet Design Guidance Note 1, Advertising and Signs (1993) which reinforces local policy with guidance requesting advertisements to be

well related to their surroundings in terms of size, scale and siting and located to avoid visual clutter. The proposal would conflict with this guidance, which is a material consideration and thus reinforces my findings.

13. For the above reasons, with regard to Appeal A, I conclude that the development would be harmful to visual amenity. This is contrary to Policy CDH09 of the Barnet Local Plan 2021-2036 (2025) (BLP) which requires that advertisements do not cause unacceptable harm to the area and are sensitively designed and located within the street scene and wider townscape, along with an appropriate size and siting.
14. Additionally, I find conflict with Policies CDH01 and CDH03 of the BLP which promote high quality design which responds sensitively to the distinctive local character and requires proposals to contribute positively to the public realm by relating to the local and historic context and incorporate high quality design and street furniture. Furthermore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy D3 of The London Plan (LonP) (2021) which requires new development to enhance local context by positively responding to local distinctiveness through layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.
15. With regard to Appeal B, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the area.

Other Matters

16. The appellant has stated that two existing kiosks would be removed and replaced with a single street hub unit, thereby reducing street clutter in the Council area. However, this benefit does not relate to the appeal site or the immediate locality and therefore does not outweigh the harm I have identified with regard to the siting of the street hub in this location.
17. Several public benefits have also been referenced, including improved and cost-free digital connectivity for local residents, alongside supporting economic growth and productivity. Additionally, the appellant has stated that the street hub unit is designed to accommodate sensors to enable air quality monitoring which would assist the Council. Safeguarding benefits have also been raised where charity phone lines could be accessed from the installation. I have given these public benefits limited weight as I have been provided with insufficient information to demonstrate that the benefits of the proposal cannot be provided in a less harmful way or in a less sensitive location.
18. The policies referenced in the BLP and LonP in addition to details from the London Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2050 (2014) in support of the installation of the street hub have been taken into account but do not lead me to a different finding overall.
19. The appellant has cited the Council's delegated report as referencing compliance with Policy CDH01 of the BLP, however, reference to noise and disturbance relates to aural amenity and not visual amenity, the basis of the dispute in this appeal.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above and having regard to all relevant material considerations, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

K Dryden

INSPECTOR