



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 December 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z0116/W/25/3366190

Pavement opp Kingmarsh Way, Lawrence Hill, Bristol BS5 0FN

- 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 BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10442/F.
 - The proposed development is described as 'Proposed Installation of 1 no new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2 no digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removals'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Z0116/Z/25/3366191

Pavement opp Kingmarsh Way, Lawrence Hill, Bristol BS5 0FN

- 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 BT Telecommunications Plc against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/10443/A.
 - The proposed advertisement is described as 'Proposed installation of 1 no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 2 no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, and associated BT Phone Kiosk removals'.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. There are two appeals on this site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission for the proposed BT street hub, while Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for digital advertisements on the same BT street hub. I have considered each on its individual merits. However, as they raise similar issues, I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated, to avoid duplication.
4. 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, I have had regard to the policies of the Bristol Core Strategy (June 2011), the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (June 2014), and the Bristol Central Area Plan (March 2015) only in so far as they are a material consideration relating to matters of amenity and public safety.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in both appeals are the effect of the proposals on:

- the character and appearance of the area, and
- highway safety and public safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

6. The appeal site is located along the A420, a primary route connecting the east of Bristol with the city centre. The primarily surrounding area is mainly residential, with some commercial properties located beyond. The immediate streetscape includes a bus shelter, a bus stop lay-by, pedestrian crossing, two-way cycle lanes and other small items of street furniture, as well as the nearby Lawrence Hill roundabout. Street furniture is limited in scale and number, ensuring the road corridor retains an open uncluttered appearance.
7. Although there are some street trees near the site, the footway remains open and largely free from obstruction, allowing clear views along the street in both directions. Aside from minimal road signage and occasional non-illuminated advertising on the bus shelter, the immediate area is notably free from advertisements. These qualities positively enhance the sense of spaciousness and visual simplicity, reinforcing a coherent and uncluttered street scene that positively contributes to the character of the area.
8. The proposals comprise the installation of a freestanding, upright structure with digital advertisement panels on both sides, incorporating Wi-Fi connectivity. The structure would be positioned perpendicular to the edge of the carriageway. Although the proposed street hub would not be significantly taller than the existing bus shelter, its substantial width combined with its height would create a visually bulky form. Given the open surroundings, the hub would appear unduly dominant and intrusive, eroding the open and uncluttered character that currently defines this part of street scene.
9. Part of the appeal proposals involves the removal of two kiosks in the area, however, both are located some distance from, and outside of the appeal site. Furthermore, even if had an appropriate mechanism before me to secure their removal, any visual benefit would occur at locations some distance away and would not mitigate the harm I have identified at the appeal site and its immediate surroundings. Whilst their removal may offer some improvement to the wider area, such benefit does not outweigh the harm arising from the proposed structure.
10. The proposed advertisements in Appeal B would display a series of static images. Whilst there are some commercial properties within the wider area, none are in close proximity to the appeal site. Existing advertising is limited to small-scale, non-illuminated displays on nearby bus shelters. Against this backdrop, the introduction of a large, freestanding, advertising structure would appear visually intrusive and incongruous, introducing clutter that would erode the open character and coherent appearance of the street.
11. Whilst the level of illumination and frequency of display could be controlled through planning conditions, such measures would not sufficiently mitigate the adverse impact on the street scene or address visual intrusion.

12. The appellant has referred to a number of appeal decisions at Union Street / High Street in Birmingham¹ and outside Lidl 99 London Road in Croydon² which were found acceptable in terms of their visual effect. However, the Birmingham scheme was located on a pedestrianised shopping street with numerous sizeable items of street furniture already present, and it involved the removal of two kiosks located only a few metres away from the consented street hub. With regard to the Croydon scheme, that replaced an existing kiosk at the same location. As such, neither example appears to be meaningfully comparable to the current proposals.
13. The appellant claims that the proposed advertisements are similar in nature to those displayed on bus shelters. However, I did observe no illuminated advertisements on existing bus shelters during my site visit, and advertisements on bus shelters, whether illuminated or not, are generally secondary to the primary transport function of the structure. For this reason, I do not consider them directly comparable to the appeal proposals.
14. Overall, the proposals would harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the proposals would conflict with Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 (Core Strategy) and Policies DM26, DM27, DM28 and DM36 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2014 (SADMP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure all development is well designed and of a high quality to protect the character and appearance of the area.
15. I note reference has been made to Policy DM29 of the SADMP. However, this policy specifically relates to design of new building, therefore, is not relevant to this decision.

Highway Safety and Public Safety

16. The proposed street hub would be located close to an existing bus shelter serving multiple routes. In this location, the variation in surface treatments around the shelter plays an important functional role, defining the boarding and alighting area, the informal waiting space for passengers, and the pedestrian footway connecting to Lawrence Hill train station. This pedestrian route is further distinguished from the adjacent two-way cycle lanes through changes in surfacing. Although these areas are not physically separated, the layout is deliberately designed to manage movement, maintain legibility, and ensure safe, efficient circulation for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
17. The appellant clarifies the overall width of the pavement and contends that the proposals would retain a usable footway on either side of the hub. However, the hub would occupy an area that currently functions as part of the passenger waiting and circulation area associated within the adjacent bus shelter. Introducing a large, freestanding structure would reduce the effective width available area for waiting passengers, encouraging them to stand closer to the carriageway or encroach into the pedestrian and cycle routes. As such, the proposals would create an additional physical obstacle within a heavily trafficked environment, impeding safe and convenient movement for users.

¹ Appeal Ref.: APP/P4605/W/18/3202341 and APP/P4605/H/18/3201305

² Appeal Ref.: APP/L5240/W/21/3285401 and APP/P5240/H/21/3285402

18. The appellant refers to an allowed appeal decision at Harrow Road Wembley³. That site was located within a town centre characterised by retail parades. Although the pavement was described as wide, there is no reference to a bus shelter nearby, nor were there any designated cycle lanes. Therefore, it is not directly comparable to the appeal proposals before me.
19. The appellant contends that, given the area's speed limit, distance from the roundabout, and adequate stopping distances from the pedestrian crossing, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the proposals would compromise highway safety, noting that any recent collisions may have occurred for a variety of reasons. I acknowledge that causation for accidents can be complex, and there is a lack of substantive evidence as to the relevance of accidents data referenced by the Council.
20. Whilst this may be so, the appeal proposals would be located in a prominent position, within an area where there is currently very limited advertising. The immediate surroundings also serve multiple road users. In this context, the proposed advertisements would be visually conspicuous and could introduce a degree of distraction, particularly, given the absence of any large scale advertising at present. Although it is difficult to quantify the extent of such distraction, the potential for it to occur cannot be discounted.
21. Even if I were satisfied that the proposals would avoid harm by way of driver distraction, it would still introduce a large structure within an area that currently supports pedestrian movement and bus passenger circulation. Its presence would compromise the ease and convenience of these movements in a bus transport environment. This harm alone weighs heavily against the proposals, and when combined with the further potential for distraction to drivers, it reinforces the concerns over public and highway safety.
22. The appellant refers to allowed decisions at High Road London⁴ and High Street Croydon⁵. However, those cases involved directly replacing existing phone boxes with street hubs, and the Croydon scheme was located in a primary shopping area. The siting and constraints of those proposals differ significantly from the current appeals, so they are not directly comparable.
23. Consequently, I conclude that the proposals would have a harmful effect on highway safety and public safety. It would conflict with paragraph 117 of the Framework, which states that development should minimise potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Additionally, the proposals would be inconsistent with Policies DM23 and DM28 of the SADMP 2014, Policy BCS10 and BCS13 of the Core Strategy, and Policy BCAP30 of Bristol Local Plan – Bristol Central Area 2015, which amongst other things aim to protect the safety of people using roads and footways, and to promote walking, cycling and public transport.

Planning Balance

24. The proposals would provide free Wi-Fi connectivity and other services to the public and may make a modest contribution to the ambitions of the West of England Digital Plan. It would also replace two unattractive public kiosks in the area as part of the scheme. The appellant holds an Electronic Communications

³ Appeal Ref.: APP/T5150/W/22/3298221 and APP/T5150/H/22/3298222

⁴ Appeal Ref.: APP/Y5420/W/22/3311428 and APP/Y5420/H/22/3311430

⁵ Appeal Ref.: APP/L5240/H/21/3285398 and APP/L5240/H/21/3285399

Code license and Universal Service Obligation to provide and maintain publicly accessible call boxes. However, whilst these are benefits, and the appellant cites difficulties in finding a suitable location, there is no substantive evidence that these benefits could not be delivered elsewhere without causing the harm identified. I therefore give these public benefits limited weight due to the modest scale of the proposals and they do not outweigh the harm set out above.

25. With regard to safety within the public realm, I note that the appellant has provided an Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan intended to mitigate potential issue relating to crime and the fear of crime. Compliance with the development plan in this respect is a neutral factor rather than a positive benefit of the proposals.

Conclusion

Appeal A

26. For the reasons given above, the proposals conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Appeal B

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

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INSPECTOR