



Appeal Decisions

Site visits made on 13 and 14 January 2026

by Tom Bristow BA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/Z2260/Z/25/3376055

Land outside 18-24 High Street, Ramsgate CT11 9AG

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended ('the Regulations') against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Thomas Johnston of NWP Street Ltd. against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application is ref. A/TH/25/0829.
 - The advertisement proposed is described on the application form as the 'Installation of 1 no. new communications Kiosk with integrated defibrillator and advertising display'.
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Appeal B Ref: 6001840

Land outside 18-24 High Street, Ramsgate CT11 9AG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended (the '1990 Act') against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Thomas Johnston of NWP Street Ltd. against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application is ref. F/TH/25/0828.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as the 'Installation of 1 no. new communications Kiosk with integrated defibrillator and advertising display'.
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Decisions

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary matters

The scheme

2. In brief, the scheme is to install a multifunctional kiosk,¹ the design of which is shown on plan no. NWP-KIOSK/001, in the highway near nos. 18-24 the High Street as on plan no. CK0134/02. Appeals A and B relate to different aspects of the same proposal. Appeal A relates to the Council's refusal of advertising consent, Appeal B to the Council's refusal of planning permission.² In this instance, whilst the appellant characterises the primary function of the kiosk as for telecommunications, advertisement consent and planning permission are indivisible (one could not proceed without the other).

Statutory context

3. Unsurprisingly, the Council's decision notices in relation to the applications to which Appeals A and B relate cite similar adverse effects, principally in respect of heritage implications. The appeal site falls within the Ramsgate Conservation Area. Section 72(1) of

¹ With details of design, functionality and management further given in the 'New Word Payphones, New Communications Kiosk: Overview and Specification', of February 2025, and the Management Plan of October 2024.

² By consequence certain elements of these decisions address provisions relevant only to determining applications for advertisement consent, or planning permission, as necessary.

the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended (the 'LBCA') is therefore relevant. More specifically, the site is within what is defined as 'Character Area 2: Historic Commercial Core' as in the Ramsgate Conservation Area Appraisal (adopted 31 March 2022, the 'CAA'). A view across the site itself is shown in the photograph at CAA page 122. Then, as now, the retail unit at nos. 18-24 is vacant.

4. There are relatively few listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, this element of the High Street appearing principally characteristic of mid-to-late twentieth century town centre redevelopment (now struggling with vacancy). Nonetheless there is some intervisibility with the grade II listed Former Midland Bank, no.1 to 3 High Street, at the corner of King Street. The Former Midland Bank faces, on the opposite side of the High Street, grade II listed Lloyds Bank at no. 1 to 7 Queen Street. There are other listed buildings dotted around, notably around Harbour Street and King's Place. The former continues the orientation of the High Street heading towards Harbour Parade, both having have a more intimate and appreciably historic grain and character than the area immediately around the appeal site.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (published 7 February 2025, the 'NPPF') establishes, however, that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which it is 'experienced'. The NPPF further notes that elements of a setting may make a positive, neutral or negative contribution in terms of the significance of an asset. Settings, therefore may encompass more than visibility or visual connection. Whilst LBCA Section 66 is the 'General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions', Section 66(1) is nonetheless relevant in respect of Appeal B (and, by extension, to the scheme as a whole). Although it is undoubtedly important to identify relevant assets, here there is a risk of differentiating overly rigorously between different types. In this instance listed buildings, and non-designated assets too, form part of the mix of the Conservation Area (significance or special interest of different assets being intertwined).
6. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended sets out that 'if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.' In this instance the development plan includes policies of the Thanet Local Plan (adopted 9 July 2020).

Policy context

7. As planning concerns often competing interests in the land, different policies in the Plan and NPPF pull in different directions. Neither Local Plan policies QD06 'Advertisements', nor QD07 'Telecommunications', oppose the installation of such facilities *per se*. That is similarly the case of NPPF paragraph 141 in respect of advertisements, with NPPF paragraph 119 according in principle support to high quality communications infrastructure. Local Plan Policy CM01 'Provision of New Community Facilities' likewise accords conditional support to new or improved community facilities. The appellant focusses on the benefits of the scheme in those respects, to which I will return.
8. In summary, amongst other things, and in common with statutory provisions referenced above, Local Plan policy SP36 'Conservation and Enhancement of Thanet's Historic Environment' sets out at a strategic level how the Council will act towards supporting, valuing and having regard to significance. Policy QD02 'General Design Principles' seeks to ensure that all development promotes or reinforces the local character of an area. Local Plan policies QD06 and QD07 contain variants on a theme in terms of criteria, which can be summarised as the expectation that development to which they relate integrates appropriately with the nature of its surroundings. Local Plan policy HE02 'Development in Conservation Areas' sets out criteria via which the acceptability of new buildings in that context will be assessed.

9. Recognising that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, NPPF paragraph 202 sets out how they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Echoing statute,³ NPPF paragraph 207 sets out how applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. In respect of considering potential impacts, NPPF paragraph 212 sets out how great weight should be given to the conservation of assets relative to their importance.
10. As set out in the Regulations, and NPPF paragraph 141, the assessment of proposed advertising is limited to matters of amenity and public safety. Only effects in respect of historic integrity are cited in the Council's decision notices, the Council characterising the scheme as for unjustified street clutter. Accorded its ordinary meaning, of a useful or desirable feature of a place, amenity fairly encompasses matters of design and the relationship thereof with its surroundings.
11. I have had regard to all other relevant material considerations in addition to the NPPF and CAA above, including the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') and advice in Historic England's Good Practice Advice Notes 2 and 3.⁴

Street furniture (or 'clutter')

12. References to street furniture or clutter, notwithstanding the negative connotations of the latter, in the Local Plan and NPPF are oblique. Local Plan policy QD02 only tangentially references street furniture at criterion 7), of no real relevance to this appeal.⁵ NPPF paragraph 117.b) sets out that development should 'create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards.' By inference, in those terms, some clutter may be necessary.
13. The PPG refers to the National Design Guide (published 2021, the 'NDG'), which sets out the characteristics of well-design places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.⁶ Paragraph 99 of the NDG sets out that 'the quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves'. It defines street clutter as 'street furniture and landscape arranged so that streets are difficult to move through, use or are unattractive'. Therefore, seen through the lens of the NDS, street furniture is not merely concerned with movement and accessibility, but also has implications for amenity.
14. Building on my description of the site and its surroundings above, in respect of Character Area 2, the CAA aptly explains how this particular area is characterised principally by 'twentieth century redevelopment in the form of large-footprint retail units which made little attempt to respond to their built heritage context...'. In fairness, there is little that is readily distinctive in the immediate context to the appeal site even if nos. 18-24 are of understated art deco appearance, nos. 25 and 27 more clearly in that mould, with nos. 17 and 19 being neoclassical and historic. The CAA further notes that the high vacancy rate here itself detracts from special interest, presumably on account of this location having a longstanding role in the evolution of Ramsgate as a hive of activity, and posing attendant negative implications for preservation in the future.
15. CAA section 4.11 turns to 'Opportunities for enhancement'. There is a focus on improving twentieth century large footprint retail units in their design and materiality in particular (reference being made to encouragement of the use of brick, stucco and flint which are

³ Section 62(3) of the 1990 Act.

⁴ Respectively 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment', published 2015, and 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', published 2017.

⁵ Criterion 7) appearing on a plain reading relevant to external spaces designed as 'part of new development', in respect of which 'a coordinated approach...' should be taken.

⁶ Reference ID: 26-001-20191001.

common historic building materials throughout the Conservation Area). There are also references under CAA section 4.12 'Management considerations' to reducing levels of vacancy, and to 'opportunities to increase and improve the existing wayfinding and heritage information signage...', and to reviewing the design and location of modern street signage and furniture 'in order to achieve a palette that better responds to the special character of the conservation area and the setting of heritage assets therein'.⁷

Main issue

16. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on local amenity, with specific reference to historic integrity.

Reasons

Character and appearance, special interest and significance

17. The Ramsgate Conservation Area covers an extensive and irregular swathe of the Town. It is loosely focused around the Harbour and historic seafront. Ramsgate owes much to the designs and enterprise of Augustus and Edward Pugin. Nonetheless, despite its character and appearance as a rule being as a refined and planned late Georgian society resort, it nonetheless possesses a mosaic of different eras and building types. Collectively that reflects a long continuity of settlement and change in physical form.
18. That complexity of eras is reflected hereabouts, notwithstanding some insensitive and banal twentieth century development (including varied signage and various sources of illumination). Character Area 2 is summarised in the CAA as comprising 'the greater part of the settlement prior to its development as a resort town'. As alluded to above in the relationship of this stretch of the High Street to Queen Street, King Street, King's Place and Harbour Street, there is hereabouts a relatively intimate character, a tighter and livelier grain than prevails elsewhere.
19. As above, there are also occasional remnants of earlier eras near the appeal site; neoclassical nos. 17 and 19 are principally faced in stucco and brick. Art deco buildings at nos. 25 and 27 the High Street, and to some extent nos. 18-24, possess some historic interest. Certain buildings have evidently taken the place of others over time, reflecting the continued function of this area as the centre of economic gravity of the Town.
20. The Former Midland Bank and Lloyds Bank, particularly the ostentatious latter, were both located and designed as symbolic representations of authority, commerce and stability. Although the relevant list entry indicates that the former essentially originated in its present form in 1921, it took the place of the 1789 London Hotel. Lloyds Bank, as it stands more-or-less originating around 1895-1896, again occupies the former site of a library and bank established before 1785 and 1808 respectively.
21. The appeal site and its surroundings, particularly towards the Harbour, evidently reflect a longstanding thoroughfare. That is also attested to by the grade II listed Red Lion opposite the Midland Bank, which the list entry indicates originated around the late seventeenth century. Similarly that the High Street here is pedestrianised, or a shared space with vehicular access, also reflects the past in the present (the area emerging in an era where vehicular traffic was less dominant an influence than it now is).
22. Insofar as relevant to this appeal the special interest and significance of listed buildings, along with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, derives from their form, materials, and relationship to one another. Notwithstanding more recent development

⁷ It is, in all likelihood, the latter to which reference is made in the Council's planning decision notice related to appeal B, in the associated officer report, and in representations on behalf of Ramsgate Town Council of 7 October 2025.

those attributes reflect successive overlays of intervention in an area that has always played a central role in the economy of Ramsgate, in turn enabling an authentic appreciation of historic economic and social forces in the present.

The proposal

23. In addition to as summarised in paragraph 2 of this decision, the appeal site is shown as a roughly rectangular parcel of highway land on plan no. CK0134/01. Insofar as the location of the kiosk is concerned, it is open. At ground floor nos. 18-24 is a retail unit, now vacant. At no. 28, which projects forward of the facade of nos. 18-24, there is presently a betting shop. The role of the appeal site directly in terms of historic integrity might fairly be summarised as neutral (being an essentially open element of highway land). It neither detracts from, nor adds to, historic integrity. It is simply there.
24. Plan no. CK0134/02 shows that the kiosk, or 'Digital Screen' as it is annotated, would be set 2.865m away from the facade of no. 18-24 (reciprocally 8.738m from the facade of no. 21 to 23 on the opposite side of the High Street). Its physical dimensions are set out in the officer reports associated with the scheme. Plan no. CK0134/02 shows how the screen would be set close to an existing lamp column, bench, cycle hoop, and tree (all present at the time of my site visit). There are occasionally similar features elsewhere hereabouts.

The effect of the proposal

25. It is a truism that areas need to evolve somewhat to address changing trends, technologies and preferences. In that context the appellant contends that the scheme would simply reflect 'the ongoing evolution of streetscapes across the United Kingdom'. As also recognised by the Council, I acknowledge that in its overall form, the kiosk has echoes of a traditional telephone box (the appellant aptly defining it as 'simple and robust'). To some extent such a feature would not be unexpected within Ramsgate town centre.
26. Nevertheless, the kiosk has none of the refinement of traditional (K2-K6) phone boxes. Whilst essentially open, the digital display is both a bulky and eye-catching element (advertisements being designed to attract attention). In those respects the kiosk would be more intrusive than other late twentieth century (KX100) phone boxes. The kiosk would be inherently engineered, modern, and mass produced. It is of its time, anachronistic relative to an historic environment. Difference naturally draws attention, which in this instance would serve to divert attention from that historic integrity which remains.
27. In the appellant referring to the ongoing evolution of streetscapes, as above, there is no recognition that the High Street here is within a Conservation Area. Not all streetscapes across the UK have evolved equally, nor should they going forward. As above, that is a position recognised particularly in CAA section 4.12 'Management considerations' which advocates ensuring both the location and design of street furniture is contextually and historically sympathetic.
28. It cannot reasonably be said that the scheme would achieve anything other than render the environment here less consistent with historic integrity. Given my reasoning above, the scheme can only realistically be described as harmful to both character and appearance, and to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Consideration

29. It is for the decision-taker, having established that harm would result, to gauge its magnitude. Given the various moderating factors described throughout this decision, and as a small element of the Conservation Area and setting of nearby listed buildings would be affected, it is fair to categorise the harm that would result as 'less than substantial' with

reference to NPPF paragraph 212 (and furthermore tending towards the lower end of a spectrum within that categorisation).⁸

30. NPPF paragraph 215 sets out that any less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. That is a balance to which I now turn, noting also that NPPF paragraph 213 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require 'clear and convincing justification'.

The balance

31. As in paragraph 7 above, various provisions of the Local Plan and NPPF are not opposed to the installation of such facilities or conditionally supportive thereof. The appellant's Heritage Statement sets out how 'as part of the proposal, rationalisation of the existing estate will remove some obstruction within the historic fabric ...'.⁹ It is, however, entirely unclear what rationalisation is intended to occur, to whose estate, or indeed any mechanism to secure that in practice.
32. The applications are accompanied by correspondence of 21 July 2025, which explains that there is the intention to install a network of kiosks within the Council's administrative area. That is stated to be with the aim of 'providing a base level coverage of accessible communication facilities...', the Heritage Statement setting out that the scheme would 'support the telephony coverage of the area'.
33. Whilst such kiosks may provide a valuable role to some, it is unclear if communication facilities and telephony are considered by the appellant to be one and the same term. It is furthermore unclear what existing provision is hereabouts in those respects, including the nature of existing network coverage. It is furthermore unclear whether such intentions relate to the particular NWP Street Ltd. ecosystem or to that of other operators.
34. More broadly I am told that the kiosk will provide 'a necessary and desirable public benefit'. I acknowledge that some of the services intended to be offered, notably Wi-Fi, device charging, wayfinding and a defibrillator may well be considered beneficial to some extent. They may draw footfall to an historically busy thoroughfare. That said, such benefits cannot simultaneously be both 'necessary' and 'desirable'. There is no evidence before me as to what existing provision is in those respects, or as to regards any potential disbenefits.¹⁰ There is no substantiation before me.
35. I am told that NWP Street Ltd. operates in conjunction with Trees for Cities, to secure tree planting. At face value such planting is intrinsically a positive environmental outcome. Nonetheless in the absence of any metrics, for example the amount of carbon that might be sequestered relative to created through the operation of the kiosk, there is nothing to establish precisely what benefits would result in that respect (setting aside the absence of a mechanism in that regard).¹¹
36. Consequently, and even were the scheme acceptable in all other respects, I cannot accord the public benefits of the scheme more than very limited weight on the basis of the information before me. They are insufficient to provide clear and convincing justification

⁸ That appears to be reasoning foreseen by the appellant, the associated Heritage Statement setting out how 'The installation of a communication kiosk within Ramsgate Conservation Area could be perceived to cause less than substantial harm'.

⁹ The appellant bringing appeal ref. APP/R5510/Z/16/3157043 in Hillingdon to my attention whereby the replacement of existing telephone box with a kiosk was found to reflect an improvement to visual amenity, and similarly to replacement in Kensington and Chelsea (ref. APP/K5600/W/17/3190377).

¹⁰ Noting that the appeal site is somewhat occluded from view within the High Street given the relationship of no. 18-24 and no. 28 beyond it (taking account of the representation of Kent Police of 4 August 2025 indicating that such provision may draw antisocial behaviour and occlude CCTV monitoring).

¹¹ Given the vagaries in the information before me, I cannot rationally address that via condition that would fulfil the tests in NPPF paragraph 57.

relative to the harm that would result. The scheme would, in other words, have an undue adverse effect in terms of amenity. It would conflict with the expectations of statute and with both the relevant provisions of Local Plan policies SP36, QD02, QD06 and of NPPF paragraph 202. No other material considerations justify allowing the appeal.

Conclusion

37. For the above reasons, having taken account of the relevant statutory and policy context to each appeal, the development plan as a whole as necessary, and with reference to all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

Tom Bristow

INSPECTOR