



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 November 2025

by **M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/T5150/W/25/3372621

Outside No 181 East Lane, London HA0 3NE

- 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 British Telecommunications PLC against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
- The application reference is 25/1666.
- The development proposed is a Street Hub 3 unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/T5150/H/25/3372623

Outside No 181 East Lane, London HA0 3NE

- 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 British Telecommunications PLC against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
- The application reference is 25/1667.
- The advertisement proposed is 2x digital internally-illuminated, intermittent display screens to BT Street Hub.

Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a Street Hub 3 unit outside No 181 East Lane, London HA0 3NE in accordance with the terms of the application, reference 25/1666, subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the Advertisement outside No 181 East Lane, London HA0 3NE in accordance with the terms of the application, reference 25/1667. 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 additional conditions in the attached Schedule.

Preliminary and Procedural Matters

3. I have been appointed to determine two appeals at the same site, relating to a proposal for a new BT Street Hub. Appeal A relates to an application for planning permission for the kiosk structure, while Appeal B relates to an application for advertisement consent for the integrated digital display. Notwithstanding the different forms of words used on the two decision notices issued by the Council, the issues in both appeals are essentially the same so, while I have of course assessed each proposal on its own merits, in order to avoid duplication I have dealt with the two appeals together except where clearly stated otherwise.

4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (“the Regulations”) set out that powers shall be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. While I have therefore had regard to relevant policies of the 2022 Brent Local Plan (“the BLP”) and the London Plan 2021, they have not been determinative in Appeal B.

Main Issues

5. For both appeals, the decision notice issued by the Council gave a single reason for refusal, encompassing matters of appearance/visual amenity and safety. The main issues are therefore the effect of the proposal on:
- The character and appearance or visual amenity of the area; and
 - Pedestrian and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance/visual amenity

6. The appeal site is an area of the footway outside No 181 East Lane, on the south side of that street close to the entrance to North Wembley Station. It is within a shopping area – described by the Council as a neighbourhood parade, and which mostly comprises relatively small commercial units on the ground floor of two- or three-storey buildings – extending west of the station along East Lane. There is a variety of street furniture at this location, including pedestrian guardrails at the edge of the footway, litter and recycling bins, a group of Sheffield cycle stands, and an existing BT telephone kiosk.
7. The proposed Street Hub unit would be set close to the edge of the footway, alongside and perpendicular to the guardrails. It would be a freestanding structure, approximately 3.0m high, 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep, clad in powder-coated aluminium panels in a dark grey finish. There would be two digital display screens, one on each side of the unit, which would be of tempered and toughened laminated glass. While the hub would be taller than the telephone kiosk near the site, it would have a slim profile which would moderate its visual impact; combined with the modern design and dark finish it would not be an unduly prominent or intrusive feature in the streetscape.
8. I carried out my site visit at around dusk on a weekday evening and saw that, as well as various shopfront displays, there are some other illuminated advertisements nearby. These give the area a moderately vibrant, though not excessively garish, commercial character which is in keeping with its neighbourhood parade status. The appeal site is reasonably well-separated from other on-street advertisements such as those on freestanding displays and the bus shelters west of Harrowdene Road, so the proposal would not lead to a harmful over-concentration of advertisements. Overall, neither the hub itself nor the display advertisements would be unexpected or incongruous elements in their surroundings.
9. I acknowledge that the Council is concerned that the introduction of a new hub at this location would run contrary to its aim of decluttering the public realm. However, the appellant’s evidence is that the proposed installation would be

accompanied by the removal of two existing telephone kiosks; the one immediately adjacent to No 181 East Lane described above, and another on the north side of the street alongside No 2 Peel Road. There would therefore in fact be a net decluttering of the public realm in the vicinity of North Wembley Station. This is a benefit which I consider carries moderate weight in favour of the appeal scheme, although so that it can be secured it is necessary to impose a condition requiring the existing kiosks are removed in a timely manner.

10. Taking all this together, in respect of Appeal A I conclude that the development would not cause unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area. There would therefore be no conflict with Policies DMP1 and BD1 of the BLP or Policy D8 of the London Plan 2021. Together, and among other things, these policies seek to ensure that development is of acceptable in location, siting, scale, materials, detailing and design so that it complements the locality; that advertisements minimise intrusive lighting, and that unacceptable cluttering of streets is avoided.
11. In respect of Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the area. I have taken into account the same development plan policies I have just referred to, insofar as they are material.

Pedestrian and highway safety

12. The first element of the Council's concern in relation to public safety is that the proposed hub would impede safe use of the footway by constraining pedestrian movement. Given the site's location outside North Wembley Station, the Council noted that "pedestrian activity is high throughout the day and particularly intense during peak train arrivals", and that congestion would be increased.
13. The submitted drawings show that there would remain around 3.6m of pavement between the side of the hub unit and the front of No 181 East Lane, though it is also apparent that around 1.2m of that is the private (though open) forecourt of No 181 rather than the public footway. The Council referred to Transport for London's *Pedestrian Comfort Guidance* ("the TfL Guidance") which recommends a minimum unobstructed footway width of 4.2m for "footways experiencing high pedestrian flows, such as those adjoining transport nodes or local shopping parades"; it also notes that the current width of around 3.9m (constrained as it is by the pedestrian guardrails) already falls short of that standard.
14. I carried out my site visit at around 1630-1645 on a Thursday afternoon, so during what might reasonably be considered the early part of the evening rush hour. Underground and Overground services arrive at North Wembley every six or seven minutes, but it is not a large station. I saw that the very small number of exit barriers and the narrow station doorway are factors which already significantly limit the rate at which people leave the station (though in fact, at the time I was there, overall numbers exiting the station were such that congestion was not an issue at all). While I acknowledge that what I saw was only a brief snapshot, and there may well be times when the station is busier, I did not see anything to suggest that pedestrian flows would be likely to be so much greater that the general circumstances would be significantly different.
15. Furthermore, the hub would be in line with (and around 5m from) the row of cycle stands in front of the station which, with bikes locked to them – as was the case

when I was there – are somewhat wider than the hub would be. Even allowing for the slightly greater depth of the footway between the station building and the cycle stands, based on everything I have seen I am satisfied that the proposed hub unit would be unlikely to have a materially greater effect on pedestrian circulation than the existing street furniture in the vicinity.

16. The second element of the Council's safety concern relates to the East Lane/Harrowdene Road/Peel Road signalised junction with pedestrian crossings, some 25m or so west of the site; in particular, the possibility that drivers travelling west towards that junction might be distracted by the illuminated digital advertisement.
17. I saw that, for vehicles heading towards the appeal site from the east, East Lane has a broad left-hand sweep as it rises towards the bridge carrying the road across the railway lines. It then straightens out on the bridge itself, before passing the appeal site. There are high level repeater signals at the junction on both sides of the road, such that from the crown of the bridge onwards past the appeal four separate traffic lights are visible to drivers heading in that direction. Although the advertisement on the east side of the hub unit would be visible to drivers, it would not fall within their direct line of sight to the four signal lights. Furthermore, because of the rise and fall of the road bridge as it crosses the railway lines, and the height and position of the traffic signals, the traffic lights would be likely to come into drivers' view before the advertisement.
18. For drivers heading east, the west-facing advertisement would be on the far side of the road, and some distance beyond the signal-controlled junction. Drivers would arrive there having already passed through the majority of the neighbourhood parade area, and would therefore be attuned to the relatively more commercial character of the area, including other illuminated advertisements I have already described. The proposed installation would therefore be unlikely to represent a significant distraction.
19. Taking all of these points together, in respect of Appeal A I conclude that the development would not result in harm to highway and pedestrian safety. It would not therefore conflict with Policy BT1 of the BLP, or with Policies T2 and T4 of the London Plan 2021. Together, and among other things, these policies seek to support active and sustainable travel, to improve street safety, comfort, convenience and amenity, and to ensure that development does not increase road danger.
20. In respect of Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisement would not have a harmful effect on public safety. I have taken into account the same development plan policies I have just referred to, insofar as they are material, and the provisions of Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") which requires consideration of public safety in respect of advertisements.

Conditions

21. The Council suggested a number of conditions in the event of my allowing the appeals, which I have considered in the light of the tests set out in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. They did not specify whether the suggested conditions should be applied to the planning permission or to the advertisement consent, and I have therefore exercised my own judgement on this matter.

22. For Appeal A, as well as the standard time limit condition (1), in the interests of certainty it is appropriate that there is a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans (2). I have also imposed a condition requiring the removal of the existing BT telephone kiosks as specified in the Design and Access Statement (3), in view of the weight I have given to ensuring that there would be a net reduction of clutter in the area.
23. For Appeal B, the appellant suggested (again in the Design and Access Statement) that a 10-year advertisement consent should be granted. However, the arguments put forward for this did not, in my view, amount to a substantive justification for a departure from the five-year period set out in the standard conditions. I have imposed conditions relating to the overnight brightness of the display screens (1) and to the control of images and suchlike (2) in the interests of amenity. A condition prohibiting the use of images resembling road traffic signs and signals (3) is imposed in the interest of highway safety.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that both appeals should be allowed.

M Cryan

Inspector

Schedule of Conditions – Appeal A

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be installed and operated in accordance with the following approved drawings and documents:
 - Site Location Plan 24006901_PLN_LOC_1.1
 - Proposed Site Plan 24006901_PLN_SI_2.1
 - Elevation Plan 24006901_PLN_EL_3.1
 - BT Street Hub unit dimensions
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement – Dalcour Maclaren BRT-123
 - BT Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan Version 3
 - Street Hubs Noise Management Plan – V2.1 February 2025
 - Professional Lighting Guide 05/23 *The brightness of illuminated advertisement including digital displays* – Institute of Lighting Professionals
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until such time as the two existing BT telephone boxes identified as “sacrificial kiosks” on page 3 of the approved Planning Design and Access Statement have been removed and the land restored to a condition which matches the footway immediately surrounding their site.

Schedule of Conditions – Appeal B

- 1) The intensity of the illumination of the advertisements permitted by this consent shall be no greater than 600 candelas per square metre (cd/m²) between dusk and dawn.
- 2) The minimum display time for each advertisement image shall be 10 seconds and the change between advertisement images shall take place over a period no greater than one second with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images. The advertisement shall not include any features which would result in interactive messages or advertisements being displayed.
- 3) No images displayed shall resemble official road traffic signs, traffic lights or traffic matrix signs.