



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2026

by **G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: 6001632

Footpath outside 94 Remembrance Road, Coventry CV3 3DP

- 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 Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0001705/FUL.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels to either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3375705

Footpath outside 94 Remembrance Road, Coventry CV3 3DP

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group PLC against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0001704/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels to either side of the unit.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission for installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels to either side of the unit. Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent regarding the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels to either side of the unit. I have considered each on its merits, however, as they raise similar issues, I have combined both decisions into a single decision letter.
3. The Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. I have taken account of the provisions of the development plan insofar as they are material to Appeal B. The Council states that the proposal would not lead to harm to public safety, and based on the information before me, I find no reason to conclude otherwise.

Main Issue

4. The main issue relevant to Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
5. The main issue relevant to Appeal B is the effect of the proposal on visual amenity.

Reasons

6. The proposed Street Hub (the hub) would be located within the pavement directly in front of a parade of shops forming part of the Willenhall Local Centre. The appeal site lies within a commercial parade characterised by a continuous canopy, fascia signage, and a range of modestly sized street furniture. The wider local centre includes larger community buildings and adjacent residential areas, resulting in a mixed urban character.
7. Within the local centre itself, the public realm contains a variety of street furniture, including bollards, streetlights, bins, bus stops, benches, phone boxes, a post box, railings, cycle stands, traffic signals and traffic signs. Built form within the pavement and public spaces is therefore a common feature. Advertisements are primarily associated with the shopfronts, lamppost-mounted signage and occasional 'A' boards positioned along the promenade. Generally, the existing street furniture serves a functional purpose, either related to the operation of the commercial units or to highway safety.
8. The proposed hub would be positioned close to a post box, in an area where there is already a concentration of street furniture including bollards, streetlights, a bin, cycle stands, traffic signs and lamppost-mounted signage. These elements appear alongside the fascia signage associated with the parade of shops. The existing street furniture is generally modest in scale and arranged at regular intervals, particularly the bollards, which create a sense of rhythm and visual order along the pavement. Importantly, the spacing between the street furniture and the canopy above the shopfronts and the limited massing of it helps to maintain a degree of openness along the promenade.
9. The proposed hub would measure approximately 3 metres in height and around 1.2 metres in width, incorporating a large digital display on each side. It would be sited between two bollards and in close proximity to the post box. While the pavement as a whole is particularly wide, the street furniture is located centrally within it and owing to its height and bulk, the top of the hub would sit close to the underside of the canopy, unlike the surrounding items of street furniture. Its scale would visually enclose this section of pavement, eroding the sense of openness that is otherwise maintained along the promenade. Furthermore, due to its location and function, the hub would not be perceived as part of the shopfront-related advertising, such as fascia signs or 'A' boards, nor as an integral element of the parade itself.
10. Positioning the hub between two bollards would interrupt their established rhythm. Although the post box already breaks this pattern, the hub's scale and proximity would intensify this disruption. Consequently, the cumulative presence of the hub alongside the existing street furniture would contribute to an increasingly cluttered streetscape. The hub's significantly larger scale and unrelated purpose would further accentuate its visually discordant and intrusive appearance.

11. The appellant argues that the hub represents high-quality design and is slimmer than traditional phone boxes like that near to the appeal site on the opposite side of Remembrance Road. While the design quality is noted, the determining factor is context, and in this location the massing and siting would render the structure discordant.
12. Reference has been made to a number of appeal decisions relating to communication hubs with associated advertisements similar to the appeal proposal¹ as well as other applications approved by the Council. The other appeal decisions cited relate to locations with different contexts, particularly in areas with more prevalent illuminated advertising or less concentrated street furniture. Furthermore, none of them were located near the appeal site on Remembrance Road.
13. The Inspectors considered the proposals within the context of the surrounding street scene, and this is an approach I have followed. Limited substantive evidence has been provided to show meaningful comparisons can be drawn between the character of those areas and the site under consideration. The approval of other developments does not, in itself, demonstrate that a similar form of development would be appropriate in all locations.
14. Accordingly, there are material differences between those cases and the proposal before me. Each appeal must be determined on its own merits, and the site-specific circumstances of this case are a material consideration. It is for these reasons that I have reached a different conclusion on this issue from that of other decision makers.
15. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, with regard to Appeal A, the proposal would not comply with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan. This expects proposals, amongst other matters, to respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. With regard to Appeal B, the same considerations apply as those relating to the impact of the proposed hub on the character and appearance of the area, and the large, illuminated displays would add to the harm to the visual amenities of the area already identified above. For similar reasons it would conflict with the above development plan policy insofar as it is material.

Planning Balance

16. The proposed hub would provide benefits including free interconnected Wi-Fi with other hubs, free mobile device charging, emergency call buttons, charity helplines and local wayfinding, free advertising space for local businesses, promotion of community and municipal services, public information services, air quality sensors and in-direct street lighting.
17. It is proposed that the scheme would result in the removal of existing phone boxes. However, the phone boxes are located on the opposite side of Remembrance Road from the appeal site and thus it has not been demonstrated in substantive terms that the proposal would require the removal of those phone boxes to be

¹ Appeal References: APP/Z5630/W/18/3209582 & APP/Z5630/H/18/3209488; APP/N5090/Z/22/3296138; APP/J2373/H/22/3305026 & APP/J2373/W/22/3305028; APP/J2373/W/22/3304941; APP/J2373/H/3305072 & APP/J2373/W/22/3305075; APP/Q4245/W/25/3363934; APP/Q42445/W/25/3363942 & APP/Q4245/H/25/3363943; ADA-180-2017; APP/J2373/H/22/3305072; and APP/C3105/W/25/3366449 & APP/C3105/H/25/3366450.

delivered, nor is there a mechanism before me that could ensure they would be removed directly related to this proposal. Given that the harm relates to the siting of a hub in close proximity to other street furniture and the nearby buildings, the removal of phone boxes that are not located on the pavement in front of this promenade of shops would not necessarily overcome the identified concerns. For these reasons, this limits the weight attributed to this matter in favour of the scheme.

18. The Framework identifies that a high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being and the scheme would support this. However, such considerations are not without regard to the Framework as a whole which advises that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed and the scheme as proposed would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst there are many benefits in favour of the proposal, they would not outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion

19. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
20. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

G Sibley

INSPECTOR