



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 January 2026

by **A O'Neill BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/D1835/W/25/3376030

Grid Ref Easting: 385098, Grid Ref Northing: 254847

Footpath Outside 2 Chapel Walk, 1 Reindeer Court, Worcester WR1 2DS

- 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 Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00667/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D1835/H/25/3375807

Grid Ref Easting: 385098, Grid Ref Northing: 254847

Footpath Outside 2 Chapel Walk, 1 Reindeer Court, Worcester WR1 2DS

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00666/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Decision

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed Street Hub unit. Appeal B is in respect to the refusal of express consent for illuminated displays that would be an integral part of the proposed Street Hub under Appeal A. I have considered both on their individual merits, but as they raise similar issues, I have combined these cases into a single decision letter.
3. In respect of both appeals, the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area (CA).
4. In respect to Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) state that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, I

have taken into account the development plan policies referred to by the Council only in so far as they are relevant to amenity, in respect of Appeal B.

5. The Council's reason for refusal in relation to appeal B relates specifically to matters of amenity. The Council raises no objection in relation to public safety, and based on the evidence before me, I find no reason to take a different view on that matter.
6. The appellant states that two existing telephone kiosks located opposite 10 Corn Market, Worcester would be removed as part of this proposal. However, I have only been provided with a description of the location of these kiosks, their position has not been shown in relation to the appeal site. Furthermore, I note that this is not referred to within the description of development or included within the red line site location plan. The removal of these kiosks therefore does not fall within the development before me, and I have not considered it further.

Main Issues

7. Having regard to the above, the main issues in relation to Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area including the Historic City CA; and,
 - archaeological remains.
8. The main issue in relation to Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

Character and Appearance / Visual Amenity

9. The appeal site is located on a pedestrianised street in Worcester city centre and within the Historic City CA which encompasses the civic and commercial centre of the city. There is no published appraisal or statement of significance for the CA. However, during my site visit I observed that, in the vicinity of the appeal site, the area is characterised predominantly by historic commercial buildings with active ground floor uses and traditional shop fronts. The rich historic and architectural qualities of these buildings make a positive contribution to the significance of the CA as a whole.
10. Street furniture in the vicinity of the site is limited. The Street Hub would be sited between litter bins and a bench, beyond which is a tree. The street is lined with low level, slim profile bollards with large gaps between them. The area around the appeal site therefore has an open and uncluttered appearance.
11. The site is within a commercial area, but I did not observe any illuminated shop signage or other illuminated or digital advertisements in the vicinity.
12. The proposed Street Hub would replace an existing red telephone kiosk which has been converted to a cash machine. The existing kiosk is in a poor condition, but it does not appear particularly prominent in the street scene and makes a neutral contribution to the appearance of the CA.
13. In contrast, the proposed Street Hub would have a strikingly different appearance. It would have a more slimline profile than the existing kiosk, but it would be wider

and taller, making it a more prominent feature within the street scene. The gloss black finish to the Hub and the associated digital advertisements on either side would give it a contemporary appearance. This would exacerbate its prominence in the context of the surrounding historic environment and create a harmful visual intrusion for users of the area. Whilst the Street Hub would be subordinate in scale to the buildings which surround it, it would have a dominating appearance in the context of the surrounding street furniture which is lower in height and smaller in bulk.

14. Consequently, the proposed Street Hub by virtue of its size and design, would constitute an incongruous structure which would result in additional visual clutter within the street scene, adversely impacting on the open character, amenity and visual appearance of the area. It would also undermine the rich historic architectural character of this part of the CA.
15. I accept that street environments evolve over time and that these Street Hubs and similar free-stranding units are commonplace in many streets throughout the country. The appellant has referenced two allowed appeals¹ for similar proposals located in CAs and two allowed appeals² for Street Hubs which would replace existing telephone kiosks. I have not been provided with the full details of each of these cases or the evidence on which they were determined. From what is available I understand that the sites are located in different towns and cities, with different site contexts. Matters relating to the effect of a proposal upon the character and appearance of an area, are by definition site specific matters of planning judgement, and it has not been shown that the circumstances of these cases are wholly comparable to the case which is now before me. Accordingly, none of the cited decisions lead me to reach a different conclusion in respect of this main issue.
16. In view of the limited scale of the proposal, I find the harm to the CA to be at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial, but nonetheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation, and paragraph 215 requires that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. Cited benefits of the proposal include that it would contribute to meeting demand for digital connectivity and services, such as free ultra-fast Wi-Fi, 5G mobile connectivity and free mobile device charging, access to emergency services, charity helplines and wayfinding. The Street Hub would offer the community, the Council and small businesses access to local digital advertising space. It could be fitted with air quality CO2 sensors and would be powered by renewable carbon-free energy. I note the support for these public benefits from a local Councillor.
18. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications and next generation mobile technology, these public benefits would be very modest and attract moderate weight in the planning balance. Consequently, the identified benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset, to which I give significant weight. This negative conclusion to the heritage balance is a material consideration

¹ Appeal Refs: ADA-180- 2017, 40 High Street, Dundee and APP/J2373/H/22/3305072, 28 February 2023.

² Appeal Refs: APP/Z5630/H/3209488, 20 December 2018 and APP/J2373/W/22/3304941, 1 March 2023.

19. With regard to Appeal A, for these reasons, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance and visual amenity of the area, and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Historic City CA. It would consequently conflict with South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) Policies SWDP6, SWDP21 and SWDP24. These policies require, amongst other things, development to integrate effectively with its surroundings and to conserve and enhance heritage assets.
20. 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 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 policies insofar as they are material.

Archaeological remains

21. The site is within an Archaeological Sensitive Area. Paragraph 207 of the Framework requires developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest.
22. I have not been provided with any information pertaining to the archaeological remains which may be affected by the proposal, nor their significance. The appellant states that the foundations of the Street Hub would be shallow and not as deep as services which already run under the site. They further assert that the presence of existing underground services means that the underground archaeological importance has already been evaluated and deemed not important. However, there is no detailed evidence before me, such as a desk-based assessment or field evaluation, to demonstrate this.
23. Accordingly, based on the evidence submitted, in respect of Appeal A, there are no reasonable assurances that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on archaeological remains. As such, the proposal does not meet the requirements of paragraph 207 of the Framework, as set out above.

Other Matters

24. I have had regard to the comments made by interested parties regarding the safety of highway users. The site is not close to a road, and as the Street Hub would replace an existing telephone kiosk, it would not present a significantly greater obstacle to movement than the current situation. I saw during my site visit that there would be ample space for pedestrian and service vehicle movements around it. As such, in line with the Council's conclusions, I do not find the proposal would be harmful to the safety of highway users.
25. I also note the concerns of an interested party regarding the potential for the proposed digital advertising to hinder the operation of surveillance cameras. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the proposal would give rise to this. As such, I do not find the proposal would be harmful to public safety in this regard.

Conclusion

26. The proposed development, insofar as it relates to Appeal A, would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole, and would not meet the requirements of the Framework. The material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
27. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

A O'Neill

INSPECTOR