



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 February 2026

by Alexander O'Doherty LLB (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/D4635/W/25/3375368

Pavement o/s Wolverhampton Railway Station, Railway Drive, Wolverhampton WV1 1LE

- 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 Nathan Still (In Focus Network Ltd) against the decision of Wolverhampton City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00863/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as, "This application relates to the installation of a modern, multifunctional Hub unit featuring an integral advertisement display and defibrillator available for public use".
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/D4635/H/25/3375295

Pavement o/s Wolverhampton Railway Station, Railway Drive, Wolverhampton WV1 1LE

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the 2007 Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Nathan Still (In Focus Network Ltd) against the decision of Wolverhampton City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00864/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described on the application form as, "This application relates to the installation of a modern, multifunctional Hub unit featuring an integral advertisement display and defibrillator available for public use".
-

Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The proposed advertisement for Appeal B would be an integral part of the proposed development for Appeal A. As such, to avoid repetition I have provided one reasoning section, detailing my findings for both appeals. Notwithstanding this, each proposal and appeal has been considered individually, and on its own merits.
4. Appeal B was refused by the Council in relation to amenity only; public safety was not identified as a concern. I have considered Appeal B on the same basis.

Main Issues

5. The main issues with respect to Appeal A are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and on public safety. The main issue with respect to Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

Character and appearance / amenity

6. The site comprises an area of footway, situated just beyond the building containing the entrance to Wolverhampton Railway Station. A large multistorey car park is present opposite the station. The station frontage is of a contemporary design, and the footway in front of it is largely devoid of street furniture, apart from intermittently-placed upright barriers which separate the footway from the metro tram lines. This gateway to and from the station is visually open. The lack of street clutter complements the attractive and streamlined design of the station.
7. The proposed multifunctional hub unit would be a wide and tall structure in its context. Although retail outlets exist within the station, due to the absence of similar hub structures nearby and on the footway it would be out-of-character with the area. As a result of its large scale, the proposed hub would appear as a bulky and noticeably incongruous feature when seen from nearby viewpoints. In its prominent position in this gateway location, it would create visual clutter and would unduly detract from the appearance of the station.
8. I observed that, apart from the illuminated sign displaying the word 'COSTA', the remainder of the frontage of the station is restrained in terms of lighting. In this context, the proposed illuminated advertisement, which would be large in scale, would appear as a prominent and overly-dominant feature. It would exacerbate the harmful impacts caused to the character and appearance of the area identified above.
9. Therefore, in relation to Appeal A, I find that the proposed development would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy D6 of the Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan 2001 – 2011 (adopted 2006) (UDP) which provides that, amongst other things, proposals should create or reinforce local distinctiveness by comprising site-specific design solutions that respond explicitly to the site and its context, and with Policy D7 of the UDP which provides that, amongst other things, all development should be of a height that helps achieve a strong sense of place, relates positively to its surroundings and the local topography, and does not detract from important views and landmarks.
10. In relation to Appeal A, the proposed development would conflict with Policy D9 of the UDP which provides that, amongst other things, buildings, structures, boundary treatments and landscape features should make a positive contribution to the locality through the use of appropriate form and good quality detailing and materials, and with ENV3 of the Black Country Core Strategy (adopted 2011) (BCCS) which provides that, amongst other things, development proposals across the Black Country will deliver a successful urban renaissance through high quality design.

11. In relation to Appeal B, I find that the proposed advertisement would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on amenity. In accordance with Regulation 3(1) of the 2007 Regulations, material to my findings are the same policies mentioned with respect to Appeal A. For the reasons given above, in relation to Appeal B, the proposed advertisement would conflict with these policies. It would also conflict with part 2 of Policy EP19 of the UDP which provides that, amongst other things, outdoor advertisements will not be permitted where their location, scale, design or means of illumination would have a harmful effect on the appearance of an area by reason of visual clutter, over dominance in the street scene or otherwise being out of scale or character with the building, buildings or immediate neighbourhood where they are to be displayed.

Public safety (Appeal A only)

12. The proposed hub would be positioned on a part of the footway which leads directly to the entrance to the railway station. The footway also leads to the metro tram stops located beyond the station building. This area is often very busy with pedestrians walking to and from the station and the metro tram stops.
13. Although the hub would be positioned on an area of the footway which is wider than the area immediately in front of the railway station, due to its width and overall footprint it would nevertheless cause an obstruction to pedestrians in this very busy area. It would cause a particular hazard for people in wheelchairs and the partially-sighted, who may have difficulties manoeuvring around it. As such, it would increase the risk of collision between pedestrians.
14. Therefore, in relation to Appeal A, I find that the proposed development would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on public safety. It would conflict with Policy AM15 of the UDP which provides that, amongst other things, all development proposals should be designed and implemented to contribute towards improving road safety and personal security.

Other Matters

15. I have had regard to the submitted copy of the Council's e-mail of 16 October 2024, where the Council gave its opinion on a potential suitable location for the proposed hub. That opinion was expressed as being a suggestion only. Moreover, I am not bound to fall in line with any previous opinion of the Council. I have explained in detail on the main issues above why the proposed hub and associated advertisement would cause harmful effects in their proposed location. There is nothing in the Council's e-mail which causes me to alter my findings.

Other Considerations and Planning Balance

16. I have taken account of the various benefits of the proposals, which include (amongst other benefits) free Wi-Fi, a 24/7 publicly accessible defibrillator, and device charging. A single hub and advertisement are proposed, and it has not been demonstrated that the scale of these benefits to the local area would be significant. It has not been demonstrated that a hub and advertisement sited in a less harmful location could not bring the same or similar benefits.
17. Conversely, the proposals would not contribute towards the creation of high quality places, which the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Furthermore, the proposed hub would have a harmful effect on public safety, in conflict with paragraph 117 c) of the Framework, which seeks to create places that are safe.

18. In relation to Appeal A, I find that the matters advanced in support of the proposed development, do not, either individually or collectively, outweigh the harms identified, nor the conflict with the development plan policies cited above.
19. The 2007 Regulations make clear that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Appeal B has been assessed on this basis. Therefore, in relation to Appeal B, none of the other considerations raised alters my findings on the main issue above.

Conclusions

20. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed and that Appeal B should be dismissed.

Alexander O'Doherty

INSPECTOR