



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 2 February 2026

by K Dryden BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24TH February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3375142

Outside 210A Ballards Lane, London N3 2NA

- 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 BT Telecommunications PLC against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application reference is 25/2768/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a Street Hub 3 Unit and the removal of the existing telephone kiosk.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/N5090/Z/25/3374984

Outside 210A Ballards Lane, London N3 2NA

- 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 BT Telecommunications PLC against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application reference is 25/2769/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a Street Hub 3 Unit and the removal of the existing telephone kiosk.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same site and to each other. I have considered each on its individual merits, but I have combined these cases into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise the same issues.
4. On 16 December 2025 the Government published a consultation 'Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system', together with an accompanying Written Ministerial Statement. The proposed reforms are draft and therefore may be subject to change. Whilst the draft Framework is a material consideration, insofar as it is relevant to the appeals, there is little change to the direction of thrust of the policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (the Framework) and there is no proposed change to the consent process for advertisements. As such, it has not been necessary to consult the parties on the proposed reforms.
5. The above site address is taken from the application forms. The Council has used a different address on its decision notices but there is no evidence that this was formally agreed. The address used by the appellant is sufficiently accurate to describe the location of the site.

6. The description of the proposal in the banner heading for Appeal B is taken from the application form. However, the Council has described the proposal as 'insertion of two internally illuminated digital LED screens, one on each side of the InLink Unit'. As this is a more accurate description, that specifies the advertisements proposed, I have determined the appeal on this basis.
7. In respect of Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken account of the policies the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

8. The Council has raised no objection in respect of public safety or noise (aural amenity) and based on my observations at the site visit and the evidence provided, I have no reason to take a different view. The main issue in dispute is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area.

Reasons

9. The appeal site comprises a section of public footway on Ballards Lane, close to the junction with Granville Road. The proposal would be situated to the front of 210A Ballards Lane, which forms part of a small parade of commercial units with residential uses over upper storeys. Beyond this parade, the surrounding area is predominantly residential, including flatted developments opposite the site and attractive period properties beyond the junction with Granville Road, to the northeast.
10. Although the appeal site is not located within a designated conservation area, the locality is characterised by a varied range of building types and ages, where this diversity contributes positively to the established character and visual interest. Despite this variation, there is a clear consistency in building lines, with buildings set back from the road, with a footway to the front. Mature tree planting further reinforces the area's prevailing character.
11. From observations at my site visit, the public realm in the vicinity of the appeal site is defined by the broad, open nature of the footway. There is minimal street furniture in the pedestrian environment beyond the existing large telephone kiosk with integrated advertisement panel, or ST6 Unit. A litter bin, street signage and utility kiosks are also found within close proximity to the appeal site. Whilst it is not explicitly clear from the proposed site plan provided, the appellant states that the existing kiosk would be removed from the appeal site as part of the proposal and this is set out in the description of development.
12. Whilst the adjoining commercial units display advertisement signage typical of a local parade, with modestly sized fascia signage and projecting signs that are proportionate to the scale of the shopfronts, there are some exceptions. In addition to the above advertisement panel integrated within the existing telephone kiosk, the adjoining commercial unit at No 210A features large window advertisements fronting the road. To the southwest of the site, a large totem sign is displayed outside 204 to 206 Ballards Lane, which is set back from the public footway.

13. Whilst the street hub would be sited on a wide area of public footway, the substantial size and height of the proposed advertisements within their associated structure would appear excessive and visually intrusive in this location. The height of the street hub unit would sit above the lower fascia signage height at No 210A and would therefore dominate the setting of the adjacent building and the adjoining terrace of properties. Furthermore, with regard to materials, the use of a black, powder coated aluminium exterior finish would appear visually oppressive and discordant within the street scene.
14. The proposal would be sited near the highway edge of the footway and consequently would appear unduly prominent within the street scene. Given the substantial height and scale of the street hub structure, combined with its proposed double-sided illuminated display screens, the proposal would be clearly visible in long vistas along both sides of Ballards Lane. It would also appear highly prominent when approaching the site from the junction with Granville Road. I therefore find that the proposal would result in a conspicuous and incongruous feature that would undermine the established character of the area.
15. I further find that the location of the large, double-sided illuminated displays, positioned adjacent to the substantial window advertisements at No 210A, would contribute to a proliferation of advertisements in this area. The cumulative effect would be harmful to visual amenity, whereby the advertisements would dominate the public realm.
16. It is acknowledged that there is an existing large advertisement panel integrated within the telephone kiosk at the site which would be removed as part of the proposal. However, I find that this feature currently detracts from the area's visual amenity, being clearly visible when approaching the site from the north along Ballards Lane. Whilst the proposed advertisements and associated structure may be slightly smaller in width and reduced in depth owing to the projecting phone kiosk hood; the introduction of a taller, double-sided illuminated display, together with the proposed visually dominant materials, would further harm the street scene. Moreover, the existence of a telephone kiosk with integrated advertisement panel at the site does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
17. Whilst I acknowledge the proposed use of non-glare glass and planning conditions could be used to control the level of brightness, frequency of image change, and hours of illumination, such measures would not overcome the harm I have found to the siting of the proposal in this prominent and sensitive location on the visual amenity of the locality.
18. I have had regard to the Barnet Design Guidance Note 1, Advertising and Signs (1993) (BDGN) which reinforces local policy with guidance requesting advertisements to be well related to their surroundings in terms of size, scale and siting and located to avoid visual clutter. The proposal would conflict with this guidance, which is a material consideration and thus reinforces my findings.
19. For the above reasons, with regard to Appeal A, I conclude that the development would be harmful to visual amenity. This is contrary to Policy CDH09 of the Barnet Local Plan 2021-2036 (2025) (BLP) which requires that advertisements do not cause unacceptable harm to the area and are sensitively designed and located within the street scene and wider townscape, along with an appropriate size and siting.

20. Additionally, I find conflict with Policies CDH01 and CDH03 of the BLP which together seek to promote high quality design which responds sensitively to the distinctive local character and requires proposals to contribute positively to the public realm by relating to the local and historic context and incorporate high quality design and street furniture. Furthermore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy D3 of The London Plan (LP) (2021) which requires new development to enhance local context by positively responding to local distinctiveness through layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.
21. With regard to Appeal B, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the area. The policies of the development plan have been considered as far as they are material, and in this respect, the scheme would conflict with the development plan.

Other Matters

22. The appellant has referenced a number of public benefits which in summary include the provision of improved and cost-free digital connectivity for the local community including wi-fi and UK calls, together with wayfinding assistance and an emergency services button. Additional digital services are also cited as supporting economic growth and productivity. The appellant further states that a proportion of screen time would be reserved for the display of public messages issued by the Council. Safeguarding benefits have also been raised where charity phone lines could be accessed from the installation. I do not dispute that meaningful public benefits would be provided through the proposal. However, I have been provided with insufficient information to demonstrate that the benefits of the proposal could not be provided in a less harmful way and/ or in a less sensitive location. Moreover, their existence does not overcome the harm that I have identified.
23. Further benefits are also claimed by the appellant whereby two existing kiosks would be removed and replaced with the single street hub unit, thereby reducing street clutter within the wider area. The appellant states that this would include the removal of the existing kiosk at the site, in addition to a further kiosk outside 193 Ballards Lane, N3 1LZ.
24. I acknowledge the public benefits of the proposal, where the removal of existing and redundant kiosks may enhance the appearance of the area and the wider locality. Whilst the proposed advertisements and associated structure may be smaller in width and depth, the street hub would be significantly taller and, together with its materials and large, double-sided integrated display screens, would appear discordant and of an excessive scale within its immediate context and in wider views along Ballards Lane. Furthermore, the benefit associated with removing a second 'legacy' unit within the wider locality does not relate to the appeal site itself and does not overcome the harm that I have identified arising from the siting of the street hub, with its large double-sided illuminated displays, in this prominent location. Therefore, whilst the benefits of removing two existing kiosks has been taken into account, this does not alter my findings or justify the harm that I have identified.
25. The appellant has referred to inconsistency in decision making and draws my attention to free standing advertising units that have been granted planning permission in the locality. The examples provided include electric vehicle charging points with integrated double-sided advertising screens sited along High Road.

However, High Road does not form part of the site context, and I have not been provided details of these examples. In any event, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits and in accordance with current planning policy.

26. The appellant has set out that there have been planning permissions granted across a number of council areas in London where existing InLink Units are removed and, in their place, street hub 3 units are installed within the public highway. However, any proposal must be assessed on its own individual merits in accordance with the specific case and site circumstances.
27. The additional policies referenced in the BLP and LP, alongside the London Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2050 (2014), and any support offered by it to the installation of the street hub have been taken into account, but do not lead me to a different finding overall.
28. The appellant has cited the Council's delegated report¹ as referencing compliance with Policy CDH01 of the BLP, however, reference to noise and disturbance relates to aural amenity and not visual amenity, the basis of the dispute in this appeal. Furthermore, whilst there are inconsistencies in the Council's delegated report² relating to the consideration of BDGN guidance, this matter has not led me to a different conclusion on the main issues of this appeal.

Conclusion

29. For the reasons given above and having regard to all relevant material considerations, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

K Dryden

INSPECTOR

¹ 25/2768/FUL

² 25/2769/ADV