



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2026

by K Townend BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: 6001678

Footpath outside Unit 5, Belgrade Plaza, Upper Well Street, Coventry CV1 4BF

- 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 on behalf of BT Group PLC against the decision of Coventry City Council.
- The application Ref is PL/2025/0001686/FUL.
- The development proposed is installation of new BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement panels to both sides of the unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3375775

Footpath outside Unit 5, Belgrade Plaza, Upper Well Street, Coventry CV1 4BF

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made on behalf of BT Group PLC against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0001685/ADV.
 - The development proposed is installation of new BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement panels to both sides of the unit.
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Decisions

Appeal A Ref: 6001678

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the installation of a new BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement panels to both sides of the unit at Footpath outside Unit 5, Belgrade Plaza, Coventry CV1 4BF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2025/0001686/FUL, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 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 carried out in accordance with drawings COV-13 002 – proposed site plan, COV-13 004 – proposed site elevation and STH-001 – street hub dimensioned elevations.

Appeal B Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3375775

2. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the installation of a new BT Street Hub and associated display of advertisement panels to both sides of the unit at Footpath outside Unit 5, Belgrade Plaza, Coventry CV1 4BF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2025/0001685/ADV. 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.

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal 'A' concerns the refusal of planning permission for installation of a new BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels on either side of the unit. Appeal 'B' concerns the refusal of express consent regarding the installation of a new BT Street Hub Unit and associated display of advertisement panels on 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.
4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) (England) Regulations 2007 require that decisions on express consent applications for advertisements be 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.

Main Issues

5. The main issues relevant to Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the effect of the proposal on highway safety.
6. The main issues relevant to Appeal B are the effect of the proposal on visual amenity, and the effect of the proposal on public safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance, including visual amenity

7. The appeal site is situated on the pavement outside of Unit 5, Belgrade Plaza which is a tall commercial building with a retail unit and gym entrance on the ground floor and hotel above, all of which have associated signage. The surrounding area is a mix of large commercial units with some smaller height buildings on the opposite side of Upper Well Street. The area includes the Belgrade Theatre, restaurants, offices, and retail units. It is within the city centre ring road.
8. Along the same section of pavement are existing streetlights, trees, and road signs. Either side of the appeal site are two bus stops with shelters and a digital advertisement board lies at the end of one of the shelters. The road surface has a long bus stop marking to include both sheltered stops. The pavement at this point is wide and the existing street furniture is spaced out near the road. The gaps between existing structures and trees and the space between them and the buildings ensure that the area is not visually busy with street furniture.
9. The proposed hub would be positioned nearer to the edge of the pavement than the bus stops, and between the two trees which sit between the bus stops. The structure would be taller than the bus stop shelters but lower in height than the trees, streetlights, and buildings. Even though there are existing bus shelters, signs, and streetlights, in my judgement, the proposed hub would not result in harmful visual clutter on this side of the road. It would be seen in the same views as the bus shelters as another rectangular piece of street furniture, in a similar orientation to the bus shelters and with regular spacing between the structures.

10. The advertisement panels, albeit larger than the bus shelter advertisement, are modest in scale in comparison to the scale of the buildings around the site. Although it would be more prominent than the existing advertisement near to the bus shelter it would be read as part of the commercial street scene. It would not appear incongruous or dominate the street scene due to the presence of other advertising and the scale of the buildings. It would also relate to the commercial character of the area.
11. For the above reasons, the proposal would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, nor would it harm the visual amenity of the area. Insofar it is relevant to Appeal B and with regard to Appeal A, the proposal would comply with Policy DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan (the LP) which, amongst other matters, aims for developments to respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.

Highway and public safety

12. The appeal site lies between two sheltered bus stops on the pavement next to a marked out bus stop on the highway. However, the proposal would not be immediately next to either of the bus stops and would retain space around both shelters and sufficient pavement width between the structures and the building.
13. At my visit I saw several buses stop at the sheltered stops and I also travelled on the bus to the stop. In all instances the passengers enter and exit the busses from the shelters. Although, if the bus stop is busier than it was at the time of my visit, passengers may queue near to the proposed hub the busses stop at the location of the shelter. I have no compelling evidence to support the Council Highway Authority concerns that the location of the hub could obstruct passengers entering or exiting a bus and, therefore, no compelling evidence that the proposed hub would have a detrimental effect on highway safety.
14. The plans confirm that the hub would not overhang the kerb and, as the road is fairly straight at this point, there is no need for a vehicle to overhang the pavement. The proposed advertisement panel, even though it would face oncoming traffic, would not be a distraction from existing road signs, and is positioned a sufficient distance from the junction and pedestrian crossing so as to not cause an obstruction or restrict visibility.
15. For the above reasons, the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would it harm public safety. Consequently, as far as they are relevant to Appeal B and with regard to Appeal A, the proposal would comply with Policies AC1 and AC4 of the LP which, taken together, require developments to not cause highway safety problems.

Other Matters

16. The Council has referred to a number of other appeal decisions for similar developments that were dismissed elsewhere within Coventry. However, those decisions do not necessarily establish a precedent for future determinations. Based on the information before me, the cited appeals concern sites that are materially different in terms of their location, character, and highway situation. It has not been demonstrated that substantive or meaningful comparisons can be drawn between those appeal decisions and the proposal before me.

Consequently, for these reasons, I have reached different conclusions from those in the other cited cases.

Conditions

17. In regard to appeal A, I have imposed the standard condition which relates to the commencement of development for the avoidance of doubt. I have also imposed a condition that specifies the approved plans as this provides certainty.
18. With regard to Appeal B, the five standard conditions are set out at Schedule 2 of the Regulations. These standard conditions are not repeated in this decision.

Conclusion

19. The proposed development would comply with the development plan as a whole 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 allowed.
20. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be allowed.

K Townsend

INSPECTOR