



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 January 2026

by K Dryden BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3375140

Outside 45 Golders Green Road, London NW11 8LL

- 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 25/2778/FUL.
- The development proposed is the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/N5090/Z/25/3375076

Outside 45 Golders Green Road, London NW11 8LL

- 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 25/2779/ADV.
- The advertisement proposed is described on the application form as the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

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 or 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. In determining Appeal A, I have statutory duties¹ to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess, and to pay special attention to

¹ under Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)

the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

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 'two digital internally illuminated, intermittent, double sided display screens to BT street hub'. 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 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, with respect to both appeals, is the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity of the area, having particular regard to its effect on the setting and thereby the significance of the Grade II listed building known as 'The Promenade, 25 to 89 and 91 to 103 Golders Green Road' (the LB) and to whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Golders Green Town Centre Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

9. The appeal site comprises a section of the public footway on Golders Green Road which is situated to the front of a retail unit, No 45. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial at ground floor level, with residential uses on the upper storeys. The site is located within the CA, and the locality displays a coherent pattern of development, with consistent building lines and attractive, terraced period properties that contribute positively, alongside examples of street planting, to its established character and visual interest.
10. Further, as referenced in the Golders Green Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (GGCA), a key characteristic of this particular part of the CA is long, distinctive and cohesive three and four storey shopping parades of high quality, with apartments above. Moreover, the significance and special interest of the CA, when taken as a whole, is drawn, in-part, from its range of characterful historic buildings, the formality of its layout, and its sylvan influences.
11. A street tree, lamp post and street signage are located within close proximity to the proposal. Opposite the site, on the northern side of Golders Green Road stands a bus shelter. From observations at my site visit, whilst a small number of free-standing digital screens, payphones and bus shelters with integrated illuminated screens were present within the locality, advertisement signage generally consists of modestly sized fascia signage and projecting signs that are proportionate to the scale of the shopfronts and that do not unduly detract from the character or appearance of the CA.

12. The proposal would be sited close to the LB, of which No 45 comprises part, and thus within its setting. The listing describes The Promenade as a curved terrace in the English Renaissance style displaying a richness of architectural details. No 45 displays twin painted oriels topped with conical lead roofs, hourglass motif to window within shaped gable; tall stacks with a canted angle bay to the right. Moreover, the significance and special interest of the LB as a designated heritage asset is drawn, in-part, from its age, historic fabric and eclectic architectural interest. Upon inspection, I observed the valuable contribution that The Promenade's aesthetic and architectural significance makes to the locality.
13. The GGCA identifies that advertisements are sometimes of an inappropriate design, size, material and colour, and where internally illuminated signs can look unsightly. The same document recommends the use of appropriate design and materials when considering proposals for advertisements, with an aim to reduce the number and differing styles of street furniture and create a more cohesive, attractive setting for the buildings in the CA.
14. Whilst the street hub would be sited on a wide area of public footway, it would still be near to the highway edge and visually prominent. Moreover, the scale and height of the proposal, combined with its large double-sided illuminated digital screens, would be excessive and visually intrusive in this location at odds with the distinctive character and appearance of the CA. The height of the street hub unit would be consistent with the lower fascia signage height at No 45 Golders Green Road such that a domineering and unsympathetic feature would be introduced to the immediate setting of the LB. Furthermore, with regard to materials, the use of a black, powder coated aluminium exterior finish would appear visually oppressive and discordant within a street scene still proliferated by historic building materials.
15. The appellant has commented that the existing shop fronts are 'all colourful in nature, and designed to draw the eye', and that the proposal would be seen in the context of the existing street scene, including shop frontages and advertisement screens. However, conversely, I find that the proposal would be at odds with its surroundings and prominent within the public realm, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the locality. Moreover, owing to its substantial form and large double sided illuminated displays, the proposal would be visible in long vistas in both directions along Golders Green Road.
16. The appellant has referred to inconsistency in decision making and draws my attention to free-standing advertising units that have been granted planning permission on the same side of Golders Green Road as the appeal site, in addition to integrated advertisements within bus shelters in the locality. The examples of free-standing advertising units are located within the CA, including 107 Golders Green Road², with further installations positioned to the front of a listed building outside 23 to 25 Golders Green Road³ and 87 to 89 Golders Green Road⁴.
17. Although I do not have full details of these cases, including the relevant existing and proposed plans, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits and in accordance with current planning policy. I note that all of the examples provided predate the adoption of the current Barnet Local Plan 2021-2036 (2025) (BLP). Furthermore, from observations at my site visit, whilst the area already contains

² 20/4504/ADV

³ 16/6101/PNT and 16/4613/ADV

⁴ 16/6110/PNT and 16/4645/ADV

several large free-standing advertisements, the addition of a further unit in such a prominent and sensitive location would add to a proliferation of visual clutter in the area. Moreover, their existence does not alter my above findings.

18. Whilst there are other illuminated advertisements, and street lighting within the locality, and therefore an existing level of illumination is already present, the size of the proposed displays and their prominent siting in a sensitive setting would be at odds with the local context. I am also mindful of the guidance in the GGCA relating to advertisements, which seeks to reduce visual clutter arising from new proposals within the CA.
19. Although 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, it remains that the structure would be noticeable in this prominent and sensitive location. Moreover, the large, illuminated displays would appear as conspicuous and discordant features that would fail to respect the established character of the area.
20. I therefore find that the proposal would have adverse implications for the visual amenity of the area, fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, and cause harm to the setting and thereby the significance of the LB. Given its relatively modest scale, the proposal would, under the terms of the Framework, result in less than substantial harm to the significance of both the CA and the LB. It is noteworthy that even less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset carries considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which I address in my Heritage and Planning Balance below.

Other Matters

21. 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 units are installed within the public highway. However, any proposal for development must be assessed on its own individual merits in accordance with the specific case and site circumstances.
22. The additional policies referenced by the appellant from the BLP and The London Plan (LP) (2021) (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 different overall conclusions.
23. The appellant has claimed that the Council has engaged in long term partnerships with advertising companies and that they should not be favoured over others. I find that any such suggestions are not relevant to the planning merits of the proposal before me.

Heritage and Planning Balance

24. 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.

25. Further benefits are claimed by the appellant whereby existing kiosks elsewhere would be removed and replaced with a single street hub unit, thereby allegedly reducing street clutter within the Council area. This would include the intended removal of a 'legacy unit' outside of 75 Golders Green Road, which is said to impede pedestrian flow and detracts from the visual amenity of the CA. A second kiosk is also intended to be removed within the Council area as part of the proposal. The removal of existing and redundant kiosks may improve pedestrian movement and the appearance of the wider locality to some degree. However, any such benefit would be countered and, in my judgement, comfortably exceeded by the harm that I have identified to the significance of both the CA and the LB.
26. In addition, 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. It is therefore my judgement that the scheme's public benefits, when considered in cumulative terms, attract limited weight that would not outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified to either the CA or the LB. Conflict therefore arises with the historic environment conservation and enhancement policies contained within the Framework.
27. Conflict also arises with Policy CDH09 of the 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; and which preserve or enhance heritage assets.
28. Additionally, I find conflict with Policy CDH01 of the BLP in so far as it seeks to promote high quality design which responds sensitively to the distinctive local character and use materials of a suitable quality and appearance to respect local character and setting. Further, the proposal is contrary to Policy CDH03 of the BLP which 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. The proposal is also in conflict with Policy D3 of the LP which requires new development to enhance local context by positively responding to local distinctiveness through layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.
29. Furthermore, the proposal is contrary to Policy CDH08 of the BLP which requires that special regard will be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of statutory listed buildings with special attention paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas. As required by Policy CDH08, where less than substantial harm has been found, the harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I additionally find conflict with Policy HC1 of the LP where development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings.
30. I have also had regard to the Barnet Design Guidance Note 1, Advertising and Signs (1993) 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 supports my findings.

31. As such, the proposal that is the subject of Appeal A conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise. With regard to Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would cause harm of an unacceptable degree to the amenity of the area.

Conclusion

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

K Dryden

INSPECTOR