
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 February 2026

by **N Armstrong BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/V5570/W/25/3375802

Pavement o/s, 261b City Road, London EC1V 1AJ

- 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 of Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref is P2025/1465/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/V5570/H/25/3375803

Pavement o/s, 261b City Road, London EC1V 1AJ

- 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 Nathan Still of Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Islington.
 - The application Ref is P2025/1467/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a multifunctional communication hub including defibrillator and advertisement display.
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Decisions

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The two appeals are for related proposals on the same site. Appeal A concerns the refusal of planning permission for the proposed multifunctional communication hub. Appeal B relates to the refusal of an associated advertisement consent, which would be an integral part of the proposed hub sought 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 to avoid duplication.
3. In respect of Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations) stipulate that control may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst the development plan policies referred to by the Council are not determinative, I have taken them into account only insofar as they are relevant to amenity and public safety, in respect of Appeal B.
4. Previous appeal decisions¹ were dismissed for a similar proposal close to the appeal site. That is described by the Council as being the same size and design as

¹ Appeal Decision refs: APP/V5570/W/23/3331793 and APP/V5570/H/23/3331795, dated 10 June 2024

the communication hub in the scheme before me, with a change to its location further away from the road's kerbside. The appellant's evidence does not dispute this to be the case. Whilst I note the references to those decisions, I have made my own assessment based upon the submissions before me and my site visit.

Main Issues

5. 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; and
 - highway and pedestrian safety.
6. The main issues in relation to Appeal B are the effect of the proposal on:
 - visual amenity; and
 - public safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance / Visual amenity

7. The appeal site comprises part of the pavement on City Road in a busy urban area, characterised by taller, modern buildings in the immediate vicinity. There is limited street furniture in the section of pavement close to the appeal site, which features low level raised planters, railings and bollards. Street lighting is located along the roadside, with traffic signals and road signage around the junctions in the surrounding area. I observed existing kiosks in the wider area, including one opposite the site, as well as that proposed to be removed opposite 305-307 City Road a considerable distance from the appeal site. A double-sided digital display structure was also evident to the west of the appeal site on the opposite side of City Road, although no further details of that are before me.
8. The proposed communication hub would be sited adjacent to a raised planter in a relatively wide and open section of the pavement compared to other parts of City Road nearby. The proposal would introduce a large and bulky structure into a relatively open position within this area of the public realm. Due to its free-standing design, siting, scale and appearance, the proposal would appear as a visually intrusive and discordant structure in this location. Noting the straight sections of City Road on the approaches to both sides of the site, its overall design and illuminated digital displays would be prominent and would draw attention, which would exacerbate the adverse visual impact of the hub. The proposal would also be at odds with the scale and appearance of the lower level street furniture and the absence of street clutter close to the site.
9. Despite the subservience in scale alongside the taller modern buildings, the vibrant characteristics of the area and its single sided advertisement, the proposal would not be seen in the immediate context of commercial frontages or other illuminated displays. It would therefore appear as an incongruous form of visual clutter within this part of the street scene. The relocation of the hub further from the roadside compared to the previous application would not significantly reduce its prominence to such an extent that this would mitigate the adverse visual impact.

10. In addition, conditions to control luminance levels, operation and switching the proposed advertisement off overnight would not be sufficient to overcome the harm caused by the proposed installation and the display of the advertisement.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have an unduly harmful impact on the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies D3 and D4 of The London Plan (2021) (the LP) and Policies PLAN1, DH6 and ST3 of the Islington Local Plan Strategic and Development Management Policies (2023) (the SDMP). Amongst other things, these aim for development to enhance local context, respond to the existing character of a place, be of high quality, not undermine the quality of existing streetscape, contribute to an attractive environment, and to not have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the area.
12. Although referenced in the Council's reasons for refusal, I do not find LP Policy T2 to be determinative to this main issue as it relates more generally to healthy streets.
13. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and its aims to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character.

Highway and pedestrian safety / Public safety

14. The appeal site is within the vicinity of the signalised junction and pedestrian crossings around the busy environment on City Road. In addition to traffic on City Road, vehicles emerge from and enter Graham Street and Central Street, with other roads also accessed from the latter. I visited the site during late morning and early afternoon on a weekday and observed continuous flows of traffic and pedestrians, particularly along the busier City Road in comparison to other roads leading to and from it in the immediate area. Motorists, pedestrians and cyclists are required to negotiate this busy environment where users may be changing lanes, slowing down to turn into the streets off City Road and approaching the signalised junction and pedestrian crossings. Consequently, drivers will need to take more care in such a location. The Council does not suggest that the proposal would obstruct the footway to any unacceptable degree, and I have no reason to disagree.
15. The digital display screen for the illuminated advertisement would be sited so that it would face towards traffic moving in an easterly direction along City Road. This larger display would also be visible when exiting Graham Street and Central Street and joining City Road. As established above, the hub and advertisement would be sited further from the roadside kerb compared to the previous application dismissed at appeal. Notwithstanding my findings above on visual amenity, this change would reduce its overall prominence to a modest degree for motorists as they approach along City Road.
16. There is forward visibility on the straight sections of City Road approaching the site and the junctions. Due to the 20mph speed limits on the approach roads to the junction, traffic speeds would also be relatively low. Therefore, there would be time for drivers travelling along City Road to assimilate the road conditions, including the proposed hub and its advertisement that would be within their field of view. The repositioning of the display slightly away from the roadside would also reduce the potential for driver distraction in this regard.

17. The existing signalised junction controls vehicles joining City Road from Graham Street and Central Street. Notwithstanding this and lower traffic speeds, there would be less time for drivers to register the proposed advertisement when joining City Road from these streets. This includes approaching from beyond a tall building when joining from Graham Street and turning and crossing over City Road when joining from Central Street. The positioning of the structure set back from the roadside in comparison to the previous application would reduce its prominence for motorists to some degree. However, given its siting and illuminated display, it would still appear as a discordant and prominent feature to motorists as they join City Road from these roads.
18. I am mindful of the comments from Transport for London that the proposal could increase the risk of collision between motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, particularly at night. The siting, scale and nature of the structure and advertisement in this location would likely result in distraction for users of the highway, particularly those joining from Graham Street and Central Street. This would increase the risk of accidents to the detriment of the safe operation of the highway. Taking account of the proposal and its site context, conditions controlling illuminance and operational aspects would not be sufficient to avoid the identified harm, and I do not consider that these would make the scheme acceptable.
19. In the absence of compelling evidence to demonstrate otherwise, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on highway, pedestrian and public safety. It therefore conflicts with Policies T2 and T4 of the LP and Policies DH6, T1 and T2 of the SDMP. Amongst other things, these policies aim for development to reduce road danger, contribute to a safe environment, prioritise safe access for pedestrians and cyclists, and that negative impacts on the safe operation of sustainable transport infrastructure are mitigated/prevented.

Other Matters

20. The appellant contends that the proposal would deliver a number of benefits alongside a network of other multifunctional units across a wider area. These include enhanced connectivity and digital infrastructure, community messaging, as well as contributing to a diverse and vibrant market economy, to achieve sustainable economic growth. It would also deliver free public services, a defibrillator to be used in times of emergency and potential monitoring and CCTV facilities. I also acknowledge that similar hubs have been installed in other locations across the country that appear to have been well used, and the sustainable design credentials of the proposal. However, the benefits associated with the development are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified of the proposal in this location.
21. Due to the distance from the appeal site and its separate site context, I give limited weight to the proposed removal of the existing kiosk opposite 305-307 City Road, which would not outweigh the harm from the appeal scheme.
22. I acknowledge that similar structures have been installed in urban locations across the country. However, each site and scheme will have different circumstances and site-specific characteristics, and my assessment has been made having regard to the effects of the proposal in this location.

Conclusion

23. 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.
24. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

N Armstrong

INSPECTOR