
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 16 February 2026

by **K Dryden BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3375237

Outside 12 Watford Way, London NW4 3JH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant [outline] 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 25/2774/FUL.
- The development proposed is the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/N5090/Z/25/3375174

Outside 12 Watford Way, London NW4 3JH

- 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 25/2775/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. As set out above, there are two appeals on the site. Appeal A relates to an appeal under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission. Appeal B relates to an appeal under section 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the Advertisement Regulations) against a refusal to grant express consent. 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. 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 Advertisement Regulations 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 refers insofar as they may be relevant, they 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 in both appeals is the effect of the proposal on the amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

9. The appeal site comprises a section of public footway on Watford Way, north of the crossroads junction with Hendon Way, Queens Road and Vivian Avenue. The proposal would be situated to the front of No 12, which forms part of a terraced parade of commercial units with mixed residential and commercial uses over upper storeys. Whilst the appeal site is not located within a designated conservation area, the locality is characterised by attractive inter-war period properties which contribute positively to the visual interest and established character of the area. There is a clear consistency in building lines where buildings are set back from the road, with a footway to the front.
10. A lamp post is located within the appeal site, with a bus stop situated to the north of the proposal. From observations at my site visit, I find that street furniture and advertisement signage is plentiful in the locality. Alongside fascia boards and projecting signs, integrated advertisements are present within multiple bus shelters along Watford Way, as well as several large free-standing integrated advertisement units, including an existing street hub unit on the opposite side of the road.
11. The proposal would be sited on a wide and prominent section of the public footway, which narrows significantly beyond 14 Watford Way. 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 just below the lower fascia signage height at No 12 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.

12. Furthermore, 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 size 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 Watford Way. It would also appear highly prominent when approaching the site from the adjacent crossroads junction. I therefore find that the proposal would result in a conspicuous and incongruous feature that would undermine the established character of the area.
13. 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 amenity of the locality. The large, illuminated displays would appear as a conspicuous and discordant feature that would undermine the established character of the area.
14. In reaching this view, I have 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 reinforces my findings.
15. For the above reasons, with regard to Appeal A, I conclude that the development would be harmful to the amenity of the area, which includes its character and appearance. The proposal in Appeal A would be 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.
16. Additionally, I find conflict with Policies CDH01 and CDH03 of the BLP which 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.
17. 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 relevant.

Other Considerations and Matters

18. The evidence provided sets out that Hendon Central Station is Grade II listed. The building displays an attractive stone colonnade to its front façade in a neo-classical design, and at my site visit, I observed the valuable contribution that the building's aesthetic and architectural significance make to the locality. The building is located a significant distance from the appeal site, set back from the road within Central Circus, and the separation is such that the site does not contribute towards the heritage significance of this listed building. The proposal would be experienced within the context of the commercial parade along Watford Way. Consequently, there would be no adverse effect on the setting of this designated heritage asset

with regard to Appeal A. This is in accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) which requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings, and any features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess.

19. The appellant has referenced a number of other considerations in support of Appeal A, 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.
20. The appellant further sets out that two existing kiosks located on Central Circus would be removed as part of the proposal. I acknowledge that the removal of existing and redundant kiosks may enhance the appearance of the wider locality. However, the benefit associated with removing the existing kiosks 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.
21. The appellant has referred to inconsistency in decision making and draws my attention to examples of digital illuminated advertisement panels within bus shelters along Watford Way; in addition to colourful illuminated and non-illuminated advertisements associated with the commercial units adjacent to the site. A free-standing double-sided advertising unit outside 21 Watford Way¹ has also been referenced in addition to free-standing advertisement units at Vivian Avenue. Whilst I have not been provided with details of all these examples, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits and in accordance with current planning policy. Furthermore, from observations at my site visit, the addition of a large double-sided advertisement display in this location would contribute to a proliferation of visual clutter in the area. Their existence does not alter my findings.
22. 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 must be assessed on its own individual merits in accordance with the specific case and site circumstances, and no two sites for such proposals are identical.
23. 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

¹ 21/3909/FUL and 21/4183/ADV

different finding overall, where I have given greater weight to the harm and conflicts identified.

24. The appellant has cited the Council's delegated report² 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 these appeals. The appellant further makes reference to Policy BHC1 but it is not clear which document this originates from. The Council does not refer to the policy in the officer reports or decision notices and for this reason it is not determinative to my decisions.

Conclusion

25. In Appeal A the proposal would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole. In Appeal B I have found unacceptable harm to amenity. Material considerations, including the Framework do not indicate that a decision(s) should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

K Dryden

INSPECTOR

² 25/2774/FUL