



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: 25 March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/N5090/W/25/3375009

Outside 12 Station Road, London HA8 7AB

- 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 25/2746/FUL.
- The development proposed is the deployment of a Street Hub 3 unit.

Appeal B Ref: APP/N5090/Z/25/3374738

Outside 12 Station Road, London HA8 7AB

- 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 25/2747/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 this 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. Following my site visit, I considered the setting of the Grade II listed building located opposite the appeal site and provided an opportunity for the parties to comment on the significance of this heritage asset, and whether the design of the proposal and its proximity would adversely affect its setting and significance. In the event that less than substantial harm were identified, the parties were invited to identify and submit details of the public benefits of the proposal. The comments received have been considered in my decision.
6. 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.
7. 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 new BT Street Hub'. As this is a more accurate description, that specifies the advertisements proposed, I have determined the appeal on this basis.
8. 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, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

9. The Council has raised no objection in respect of 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 issues in dispute with respect to both appeals are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the amenity, including the character and appearance, of the area; having particular regard to its effect on the setting and thereby the significance of the Grade II listed building known as 'Parish Church of St Margaret, Station Road' (the LB).
 - the effect of the proposal on public safety.

Reasons

Amenity/ character and appearance

10. The appeal site comprises a section of public footway on Station Road, close to its crossroads junction with High Street and Whitchurch Lane. The area is predominantly commercial at ground floor with mixed commercial and residential over upper storeys. Whilst the appeal site is not located within a designated conservation area, the locality displays a coherent pattern of development, with consistent building lines and attractive period properties.
11. A lamp post is positioned within the appeal site, which is located to the front of 12 Station Road. From observations at my site visit, I find that street furniture and advertisement signage is plentiful in the wider locality. In addition to fascia boards

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

and projecting signs, illuminated integrated advertisements are present within multiple bus shelters, as well as several large free-standing integrated advertisement units.

12. The proposal would be sited close to the LB, on the opposite side of Station Road, and thus within its setting. The listing describes the church as a cruciform design, with a tower dating back to the 1400s and displaying a richness of architectural details. 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 building's aesthetic and architectural significance make to the locality.
13. The proposal would be sited on a wide and prominent section of the public footway, which narrows significantly beyond the proposed siting of the street hub. 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 be largely consistent with the lower fascia signage height at No 12, such that a domineering and unsympathetic feature would be introduced to the immediate setting of the adjacent building, adjoining terrace of properties and the LB. 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 and harm the significance of the LB, from development within its setting.
14. The appellant has referred to inconsistency in decision making and draws my attention to free standing advertising units that have been granted planning permission and advertisement consent in the locality, in addition to examples of integrated advertisement panels within bus shelters along Station Road. The examples provided include free-standing double-sided advertising units outside 9 to 10 Boot Parade², in addition to outside 28 Station Road³. Additionally, an example has been provided of an electric vehicle charging point with integrated double-sided illuminated digital display screens outside 74 to 76 High Street⁴.
15. Although I do not have full details of all the examples provided, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits and in accordance with current planning policy. From observations at my site visit, the area contains several large free standing and integrated illuminated advertisement units, alongside other illuminated advertisements and street furniture. I find that the introduction of a further unit in such a prominent and sensitive location would contribute to a proliferation of visual clutter, where the cumulative effect would be detrimental to visual amenity. Their existence does not alter my findings.
16. 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.

² 20/4471/ADV

³ 25/0383/FUL and 25/0384/ADV

⁴ 23/1650/FUL & 23/1651/ADV

17. I therefore find that the proposal in Appeal A would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and cause harm to the setting and thereby the significance of the LB. Conflict also arises with 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; and which preserve or enhance heritage assets.
18. 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 London Plan (2021) (LP) which requires new development to enhance local context by positively responding to local distinctiveness through layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape.
19. 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. 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.
20. In reaching this view, 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 reinforces my findings.
21. With regard to Appeal B, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would cause harm of an unacceptable degree to the amenity of the area.
22. Given its relatively modest scale, the proposal would, under the terms of the Framework, result in less than substantial harm to the significance of 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 after I have dealt with the second main issue.

Public safety

23. The Council raises concern that the proposal would impede pedestrian movement, creating an obstruction to disabled and visually impaired pedestrians. However, whilst a lamp post is sited within the area of the appeal site, it is positioned close to the frontage of the adjacent building, and I find that the width of the footway to be retained is substantial and sufficient for the safe movement of pedestrians. I therefore find that the proposal would not create an unsafe obstruction in this location, where the sight line would not be significantly disrupted or endanger the

safety of disabled and visually impaired pedestrians using the footway. Furthermore, the nearest bus stop is located on the opposite side of the road, thereby reducing any potential conflict with pedestrian activity.

24. I have not been provided evidence to demonstrate that the proposed advertisements would be a distraction to highway users or that this section of the public highway is particularly susceptible to accidents. Additionally, conditions could be used to control the minimum display time for each advertisement, the use of visual effects between successive displays and to ensure appropriate illumination levels are met.
25. In respect of crime prevention as a public safety consideration, I find that the commercial activities in the locality would provide surveillance of the proposal during their opening hours. Moreover, had I been minded to grant the appeals, a condition could be added to request further details regarding the management of the street hub in the interest of preventing crime and disorder in the area.
26. For the above reasons, with regard to Appeal A, I conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on public safety. The proposal is in accordance with Policy TRC01 of the BLP which seeks to ensure a healthy, safe and attractive walking environment within, through and in the immediate vicinity of the development.
27. Additionally, I do not find conflict with Policy CDH01 of the BLP which, amongst other things, requires proposals to ensure attractive, safe and where appropriate, vibrant streets. Furthermore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy D8 of the LP which requires development proposals to consider the design and location of street furniture in the public realm so that it complements the use and function of the space.
28. With regard to Appeal B, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed advertisements would not have a harmful effect on public safety. The policies of the development plan have been considered as far as they are material, and in this respect, the scheme would not conflict with the development plan.

Other Matters

29. 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.
30. The additional policies referenced by the appellant from 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 different overall conclusions.
31. 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.

32. The appellant has cited the Council's delegated report⁵ 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.

Heritage and Planning Balance

33. The appellant has referenced a number of public benefits 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.
34. 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' on the footway outside of the LB, where this is claimed to assist the setting of the heritage asset; in addition to the removal of a second unit outside Manor Park, Station Road⁶.
35. The removal of existing and redundant kiosks may improve pedestrian movement and the appearance of the wider locality to some degree, and it is noted that this includes a weathered kiosk located outside the LB. However, the proposed street hub would be significantly taller and wider than the existing kiosk. Together with its dark, oppressive materials and large display screens, it would appear discordant and overly dominant in both its immediate context and in wider views along Station Road, thereby introducing an unsympathetic feature to the setting of the LB. 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 and sensitive location. Therefore, whilst removing redundant kiosks in the locality may be of some public benefit through improving the visual appearance of the area and pedestrian movement, this matter does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
36. 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, attract limited weight that would not outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified to the LB. Conflict therefore arises with the historic environment conservation and enhancement policies contained within the Framework.
37. As such, the proposal that is the subject of Appeal A conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole and material considerations, including the Framework do not lead me to a decision otherwise. With regard to Appeal B, I conclude that the

⁵ 25/2746/FUL

⁶ O/S Peacocks JNC Manor Pk CR PCO1 Station Road, Edgware, HA8 7JG (Planning, Design and Access Statement, Dalcour Maclaren).

proposed advertisements would cause harm of an unacceptable degree to the amenity of the area.

Conclusion

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

K Dryden

INSPECTOR