
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2026

by **C Billings BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/U4610/Z/25/3375969

Footpath opposite 15 Little Park Street, Coventry CV1 2JZ

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0001690/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: 6001798

Footpath opposite 15 Little Park Street, Coventry CV1 2JZ

- 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 Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0001691/FUL.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. This decision letter relates to two separate applications one for the erection of a BT hub and one for the advertisements on either side of the hub. The Council issued separate decisions for these as referred to as Appeal A and Appeal B, respectively.
4. Each application has been considered having regard to its own merits. However, given the similarities in the proposals and the issues raised and in the interests of conciseness, a single appeal decision letter is issued.
5. In reaching my decision on Appeal A, related to advertisement displays, I have had regard to the development plan policies cited only as far as these are material to amenity and public safety.

Main Issues

6. The main issues in these appeals are the effect of the development and advertisements on:
- the character and appearance and amenity of the surrounding area; and,
 - highway and public safety, including that of pedestrians and drivers.

Reasons

Character and appearance, and amenity

7. The appeal site is located in a wide area of footpath within the city centre commercial area. While the site is not within a Conservation Area, the buildings on the opposite side of the road are within the High Street Conservation Area (HSCA) and the Council House further along where the road bends, is a grade II listed building, within the Hill Top Conservation Area (HTCA). Additionally, there are other grade II listed buildings nearby, along Little Park Street, including Kirby House and 7 Little Park Street. Where the appeal site is, the footpath area and its surrounding environment beyond is part of an open pocket park, with hard and soft landscaping, which provides an attractive, open aspect to the area.
8. There are a number of other items of street furniture within the wider surrounding area. This includes a hub structure similar to that proposed diagonally opposite on the other side of the road, pay points for parking, lampposts, road crossing lamps, road signs, and bollards. Also, further away, toward either end of this part of the street are existing BT phone boxes. However, these structures are of a different design and location to the proposed Street Hub. Even though the appeal site is within a wide area of footway, it is a particularly open area and uncluttered by street furniture. Furthermore, it forms part of an attractive area of open streetscape, leading into the open pocket park area and set away from buildings, unlike the location of the existing similar hub structure on the opposite side of the road.
9. While the proposed Street Hub would replace two existing phone kiosks at either end of the road, these are outside the application site, some distance away and on the opposite side of the road, more closely located to existing buildings. Therefore, the existing BT kiosks are in less isolated and prominent locations compared to the appeal site. Consequently, even though the overall number of BT structures within the wider area would be reduced by the proposal, this would not positively enhance the surrounding street scene environment, nor keep the footway area where the Street Hub is proposed uncluttered.
10. The appellant asserts the replacement of the existing BT kiosk close to The Earl of Mercia with a Street Hub in that location would not be possible for various reasons, including proximity to heritage assets. However, it is not set out why, or if, other locations, less harmful than the proposal have been considered and discounted. Furthermore, while there are existing street trees near to the appeal site, these are set back of the proposed location of the Street Hub and so, would not screen the proposal from all directions, even if they would filter some views from some directions within the surrounding area.
11. Other existing advertisements nearby, some illuminated, are principally on buildings on the opposite side of the road from the appeal site. Also, the existing double-sided illuminated street hub unit is on the opposite side of the road, more closely

sited to buildings, rather than in a more isolated location set away from buildings, as per the appeal site.

12. While I do not have substantive details relating to other existing free-standing digital advertising units elsewhere in the city centre area, including those on New Union Street and Corporation Street, these are also in different locations with different site contexts to the appeal site. Furthermore, the proposed Street Hub would not compliment, nor be seen in the same context as other illuminated advertisements on the opposite side of the road or those within the wider city centre area, due to the separation distance away from them. As a result, the appeal proposal would be more prominent and anomalous within its site context, harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
13. Furthermore, despite the city centre, urban location and even though the proposed hub would be of a more slender, high quality design of sustainable materials and its designers are award-winning, it would add clutter within the otherwise open wide footway and be of a fairly dominant scale. Even though the lighting of the advertisements would be dimmed during the evenings, the Street Hub, together with its advertisements, would appear overly prominent and obtrusive within the local area. Therefore, I find the appeal proposals would be detrimental to the attractive, open and uncluttered character and appearance of this part of the street scene.
14. Consequently, the proposals would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance and amenity of the surrounding area, in conflict with Policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan (December 2017) (CLP). This policy requires development proposals to respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. Furthermore, it requires development to meet key principles, including that it provides attractive, safe, uncluttered, active and easily identifiable, high quality public spaces.

Highway and public safety

15. The proposals would be along the footway of Little Park Street, which is a one-way, single lane road with a 20mph speed limit, with parking bays either side of it at this part of the road. Due to the proximity of the proposed Street Hub to the parking bays, it is likely that it would cause an obstruction to opening side doors of parked vehicles in the nearest parking bay. As a result, this would have the potential to cause damage to vehicles, if occupiers of parked vehicles are not careful on opening doors. Consequently, this would cause a danger to public safety.
16. Also, the Street Hub would be located close to a zebra crossing and so, cause some visual obstruction to the desire line of pedestrians using the crossing point and affect the general flow of pedestrians close to and at the crossing. Thereby, the proposal would hinder the ready interpretation of the crossing signals and likely impede the safe movement of pedestrians, increasing the risk of accidents between vehicles and pedestrians at the crossing point.
17. Additionally, due to the close proximity of the proposal to the zebra crossing, the illuminated and changing advertisements displays would likely cause undue distraction to drivers of vehicles approaching the zebra crossing. This may lead to drivers not stopping quick enough or being unaware of approaching pedestrians from the side of the road where the proposed Street Hub would be. Therefore, this would likely cause accidents between vehicles and pedestrians at the crossing.

18. As set out in the Planning Practice Guidance, all advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take care are more likely to affect public safety, including for example, at pedestrian crossings, such as the appeal site. Even though the site is within a commercial locality, the side of the road where the street hub is proposed filters out from a pocket park and so a more relaxed and uncluttered environment for pedestrians on approach to the crossing point from that direction. As a consequence, this could mean that pedestrians would be less aware of potential dangers, particularly as their desire line to the zebra crossing would be obscured at times. This combined with the added distraction of the advertisements could increase the likelihood of accidents between pedestrians and vehicles.
19. There would be sufficient width of footway remaining to the side of the proposed Street Hub to allow pedestrian movement, which would be above recommended guidance. However, for the reasons given above, the proposal would hinder those accessing vehicles in a parking bay and the flow of pedestrians to the near a pedestrian crossing. This would likely cause a danger to public and highway safety, with the potential for increased accidents within the footway and at the zebra crossing.
20. In view of the above, the appeal proposals would have a harmful effect on highway and public safety, including that of pedestrians and drivers, in conflict with Policies AC1 and AC2 of the CLP. Policy AC1 requires development proposals to integrate with existing transport networks including walking routes and consider accessibility needs for everyone. Furthermore, Policy AC2 sets out that there should be no unacceptable highway safety problems.

Other Matters

21. The appeal proposals are part of a wider BT hub implementation programme for the appellants, to replace two existing BT payphones and part of 13 No. proposed within the Council area. However, I have considered the individual merits of the appeal proposal, including the appeal site context and found harm in regard to the main issues. The removal of the existing payphones located elsewhere, would not overcome the harm caused by the proposal due to its location. Also, as the existing payphones are outside the appeal site, it would not be possible to ensure that they are removed in any case as part of the appeal scheme.
22. The new Street Hub would provide some benefits, including the provision of modern communication infrastructure and services, replacing two old BT estate infrastructure. It would deliver a modern, multifunctional alternative to a traditional mast. Provide advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure, supported by government guidance, essential for economic growth and social well-being, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Also, amongst other things, the hub would provide public Wi-fi, access to public services, provide Council content for a number of hours annually, free calls to emergency services, environmental sensors and improve 4G and 5G coverage to local communities. Although, I have no compelling evidence to demonstrate the need for these enhanced services or that these services and facilities are not already provided by other means or telecommunications facilities in the local area.
23. Advertising revenue would help fund the running and maintenance costs of the Street Hub, allowing a free public electronic communications service. Although, it is

unclear from the evidence, why such revenue source is essential to ensure the aforementioned benefits. Furthermore, it is proposed to be powered by 100% renewable, carbon free energy. Consequently, I give little weight to the benefits in favour of the Street Hub itself and very little weight in respect of the advertisement. Therefore, taking account of all the benefits of the proposal individually, these would not outweigh my findings on the main issues in this instance.

24. A number of other appeal decisions have been brought to my attention¹ whereby Inspectors have allowed proposals for a similar type of structure to the appeal proposal. However, I do not have substantive details regarding these proposals and their appeal decisions, although these all relate to proposals in different locations, in different parts of the country. Therefore, I have determined the appeals based on the individual merits of the proposals.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given above, the proposals would cause harm in relation to the main issues and therefore conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Moreover, material considerations, including other policies within the LP and the Framework do not indicate that the appeals should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
26. In conclusion, appeals A and B should be dismissed.

C Billings

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal refs. APP/Z5630/H/3209488; APP/N5090/Z/22/3296138; APP/J2373/H/22/3305026; APP/J2373/W/22/3304941; APP/J2373/W/22/3305075; APP/Q4245/W/25/3363934; APP/Q4245/W/25/3363942; APP/R0335/W/25/3365044; APP/C2741/W/22/3311620; APP/Y5420/W/21/3284560; APP/T4210/H/22/3307211; APP/V5570/W/3309120.