



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2026

by R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 April 2026

Appeal A Ref: 6002622

Advertising Right 2213 Outside 133 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7SL

- 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 In Focus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref is 25/02920/FUL.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of a communication apparatus comprising an open access call box with integral defibrillator and advertisement display.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/N5660/Z/25/3376800

Advertising Right 2213 Outside 133 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7SL

- 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 In Focus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Lambeth.
 - The application Ref is 25/02921/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of a communication apparatus comprising an open access call box with integral defibrillator and advertisement display.
-

Decision

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The two appeals relate to the same proposal on the same site. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed communications apparatus (the hub) with a defibrillator. Appeal B concerns the refusal of express consent for the digital advertisement panel which would be an integral part of the hub proposed in Appeal A. I have combined both decisions into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues. However, I have considered each on its individual merits.
3. In respect of both appeals, the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
4. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 stipulate that control may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken into account the

development plan policies referred to by the Council, they have not been determinative in respect of Appeal B.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in respect of Appeal A are:
 - whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Clapham High Street Conservation Area;
 - the effect of the proposal on pedestrian, highway and public safety; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the provision of cycle stands.
6. The main issues in respect of Appeal B are the effect of the proposal on amenity and public safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site is within the Clapham High Street Conservation Area ('the CA'). The CA covers a busy, linear commercial and retail route encompassing development either side of Clapham High Street, broadly between its Clapham Park Road junction and Clapham High Street station. Although there is some variety in design and architecture along Clapham High Street, the Conservation Area Statement (2009) (CAS) identifies that its significance is derived from its surviving late 18th Century residential and 19th Century commercial buildings.
8. The proposed Hub would occupy an area of pavement on the southern side of Clapham High Street outside a Sainsbury's store. The Sainsbury's is identified in the CAS as a building which is deemed to cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA, described as 'an alien form on the street scene.' Its contemporary shop frontage is a prominent and recognisable feature of Clapham High Street, which I observed to be a jarring contrast with neighbouring historic buildings, comprising largely metal framed glazing with a pronounced and oversized canopy structure which projects over the pavement.
9. Along this short section of Clapham High Street, the pavement is reasonably wide due to the staggered frontage and recessed entrance of the Sainsbury's store. The submitted plans show that it currently includes a row of cycle stands and a lighting column. In addition, I observed further items of furniture within the vicinity, such as additional lighting columns, a bus stop, refuse bins, signal heads for a pedestrian crossing, equipment cabinets and telephone boxes. These items collectively contribute to a cluttered environment along this section of pavement.
10. The modern design and dark grey finish of the proposed Hub would reflect the detailing of the Sainsbury's shopfront. However, despite its overall slender profile, the Hub would be of substantial height and width, resulting in a large free-standing structure which would add to the proliferation or clutter of street furniture on this section of the pavement, and would further erode the quality of the public realm.
11. The orientation of the proposed Hub at right angles to the road would lead to it appearing as an unduly imposing and strident feature when travelling in either direction along Clapham High Street, inharmonious in scale to most other street furniture. Moreover, because of its siting very close to the kerb edge, the proposed

Hub would partially obscure relatively long vistas in either direction along Clapham High Street, appearing an incongruous addition in views of the historic buildings on the opposite side of the road. I appreciate that areas will change and evolve over time, but the proposal would only serve to emphasise the discordant Sainsbury's store, which would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the CA.

12. Advertisements and illuminated signage are not uncommon in busy retail and commercial areas. However, save the free-standing panel within the recessed Sainsbury's entrance, I observed advertisements in the immediate area to be typically fascia or projecting signs on buildings associated with commercial uses, rather than free-standing structures. Although the brightness of the screen could be controlled, the illuminated advertisement with changing images on one side of the Hub, would exacerbate its undue prominence in the streetscene.
13. Consequently, the proposed Hub would appear as a prominent, incongruous and visually intrusive feature in the street scene, which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA. Given the nature of the proposal, this harm would be at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. The proposal would represent inward investment in the area and would contribute to meeting demand for the latest digital communication technology, including free calls to land lines, to the emergency services and charities. Further, the Hub would offer the community, the Council and local retailers' access to local digital advertising. The integral defibrillator with 24/7 access would also have a clear public benefit, despite the Council's concerns regarding details of its safe use. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications, these public benefits would be modest and would not outweigh the low level of less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.
15. Therefore, I conclude that in respect of Appeal A, the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Clapham High Street Conservation Area. In respect of Appeal B, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on amenity.
16. Although not determinative in respect of Appeal B, the proposal would conflict with policies Q2, Q5, Q6, Q17 and Q22 of the Lambeth Local Plan (2021) (LP). Together, these require high quality design that respects positive characteristics of conservation areas, enhances local distinctiveness and contributes positively to the local streetscene with attractive, uncluttered public realm. It would also conflict with LP Policy T9 which requires that electronic communications are not visually intrusive, create unacceptable clutter, or cause harm to character and appearance.

Pedestrian, highway and public safety

17. LP Policy T9 states that proposals for electronic communications equipment on the highway should not cause an obstruction or block visibility splays – a minimum footway width of 2m should be maintained in all but exceptional circumstances. Consistent with this, the width and siting of the proposed Hub would leave around 2.7m of usable pavement up to the Sainsbury's shopfront and around 0.7m to the edge of the kerb with Clapham High Street.

18. Transport for London objected to the proposal because of the insufficient footway width and there have been several recorded collisions on this section of road in the last five years, including one pedestrian fatality. This indicates the need for careful consideration. However, based on my observations, I am satisfied that the effective clear width between the Hub and the Sainsbury's shopfront would be sufficient for the free flow of pedestrians along this busy section of the pavement, without the need for pedestrians to step onto the road to avoid the obstruction.
19. The Hub would be sited around 30m from the signal heads and before the zig zag road markings indicating the approach to the closest pedestrian crossing. This distance would ensure that the eastward sightlines of the nearside lane of Clapham High Street (a bus lane) were not inhibited for pedestrians using the crossing, despite the size and siting of the Hub close to the kerb edge.
20. The images of the advertisement panel would change frequently and would be visible to drivers in their nearside view approaching from the east, which could reasonably add further to the overall distractions experienced in the area. However, drivers (and riders) would already likely be alert from existing distractions on this busy road and would have full visibility of pedestrians waiting at the crossing. Accordingly, the proposal would not increase the risk of collision or conflict between vehicles and pedestrians or worsen highway safety in the area.
21. Notwithstanding the width and solid nature of the Hub, it would also be sited a sufficient distance from the edge of the kerb, and the nearest cycle stand, to allow cyclists to clearly see vehicles on the carriageway before leaving the pavement.
22. The proposed Hub could be used for concealment despite being more open than a telephone box. However, its siting close to a busy road with street lighting in a retail area would mean that any users of the proposal would be subject to a degree of natural surveillance. Although it is asserted that Hubs have been associated with crime and anti-social behaviour, this has not been substantiated in the evidence before me. Therefore, the proposal would not cause harm to public safety, from failure to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.
23. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to public or pedestrian safety. Whilst not determinative in respect of Appeal B, it would accord with Policy T4 of the London Plan (2021) and LP policies T1, T2, T4, T9 and Q17. Together these seek to improve accessibility, give priority to walking, and improve conditions and safety for pedestrians. It would also accord with LP Policy Q3 which requires opportunistic crime and anti-social behaviour to be designed out.

Provision of cycle stands

24. There are eleven cycle stands irregularly spaced along the section of pavement to the front of the Sainsbury's. The submitted plans appear to have omitted three existing cycle stands located closest to the store entrance but nevertheless show that two stands closest to the proposed Hub (to the east) would need to be relocated. Based on my own observations, I am satisfied that there would be sufficient space to relocate these along the same section of pavement and in the locations shown on the proposed plan.
25. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not result in a reduction in cycle stand provision. Consequently, there would be no conflict with LP Policy T3 insofar as it

seeks to improve conditions for cyclists and requires the provision of appropriate secure and covered cycle parking facilities.

Other Matters

26. The submission details that an existing kiosk on the pavement outside 220 Norwood Road would be removed. This kiosk is located a significant distance away and it is visually unrelated to the appeal site. The potential benefits of its removal have not therefore been determinative to this appeal. The high standard of reinstatement of the pavement associated with a new installation would also be a neutral matter, weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

Conclusion

27. For the above reasons, in respect of Appeal A, the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA. It conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations to suggest a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. In respect of Appeal B, the proposal would have an unacceptable and harmful effect on amenity.
28. Therefore, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR