



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 March 2026

by Lewis Condé BSc, MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 April 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/D1835/W/25/3376719

Pavement opposite 102 High Street, Worcester, Easting (x) 385037;

Northing (y) 254676

- 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 BT Group PLC against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00808/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D1835/H/25/3376686

Pavement opposite 102 High Street, Worcester, Easting (x) 385037;

Northing (y) 254676

- 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 BT Group PLC against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00807/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Decision

Appeal A Ref: APP/D1835/W/25/3376719

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at Pavement opposite 102 High Street, Worcester, Easting (x) 385037; Northing (y) 254676, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00808/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Appeal B Ref: APP/D1835/H/25/3376686

2. The appeal is allowed and express consent is granted for the display of the Advertisement consent for the installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit at Pavement opposite 102 High Street, Worcester, Easting (x) 385037; Northing (y) 254676, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00807/ADV.
3. The consent is for five years from the date of this decision and is subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the 2007 Regulations and the additional conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

4. Appeal A relates to a refusal of planning permission and Appeal B relates to the refusal of advertisement consent. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with the two appeal schemes together, but each has been considered on its individual merits.
5. The site addresses in the banner heading above are taken from the Council's decision notices, but with the stated Grid References provided on the original planning application form, as this provides a more detailed and accurate reflection of the location of the appeal site.
6. Since the determination of the original planning application the Council has adopted the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (adopted 2026) (the SWDPR). Appeal A has therefore been determined against the updated development plan. Parties have had an appropriate opportunity to comment on the change in policy context.
7. With regards to Appeal B, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (the 'Regulations') state that control may only be exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. The development plan policies are not determinative to this appeal, but I have had regard to the policies as cited by the Council in so far as they are a material consideration relevant to the matters before me.
8. In respect of Appeal B, the Council has not raised an objection in relation to public safety and from the available evidence, I find no reason to reach an alternative view.

Main Issues

9. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on: i) the character and appearance of the area, including the Historic City Conservation Area; and ii) archaeological remains.
10. The main issue for Appeal B is the effect of the advertisement on visual amenity.

Reasons

Character and Appearance / Visual Amenity (Appeals A and B)

11. The appeal site lies on High Street, a broad pedestrianised thoroughfare at the heart of Worcester city centre, within the designated Historic City Conservation Area (the CA).
12. High Street is largely lined by relatively tall buildings that predominantly accommodate ground-floor retail and commercial uses, along with some civic functions. The streetscene features a wide range of advertisements typical of a busy and lively high street, including fascia and projecting signs, many of which involve illumination. There is also a variety of street furniture and tree planting. Despite this, the street retains a generally uncluttered character due to its generous width and the spacing of street furnishings.
13. Collectively, these characteristics contribute to a vibrant, active and visually varied commercial environment.

14. The CA is sizeable, encompassing much of the city's historic core and surrounding areas. It includes a diverse townscape featuring buildings from several periods, many of which display high architectural quality and historic significance reflecting the city's growth and development. While the overall character of the CA is varied, the appeal site is within High Street, whereby the character is of a highly commercial nature, whilst the public realm street works are of a generally high-quality.
15. Although no Conservation Area Appraisal has been provided, based on my own observations I consider the significance of the CA, in so far as it relates to the appeal, to derive principally from its high-quality townscape, its concentration of architecturally and historically important buildings, and its long-standing function as a civic and commercial centre.
16. The proposal involves replacing an existing red telephone kiosk that has been repurposed as a cashpoint. As such, it would not result in additional street clutter. While the proposed structure would be taller and wider than the existing telephone box, it would have a slender profile, resulting in a reduced footprint and bulk. In the context of other tall elements within the streetscene, its scale would not appear untoward.
17. The proposed street hub would have a contemporary design, whilst the use of large digital displays would result in a more striking appearance than the existing structure to be replaced. However, the surrounding environment, despite its historic context, already includes a mixture of modern architecture and features. This includes nearby examples of digital displays, albeit of slightly differing design and smaller scale. In this context, the proposal would not appear incongruous.
18. Furthermore, subject to conditions that regulate the operation of the digital screens, notably with regard to levels of illumination and the use of static imagery, I am satisfied that the proposal would not appear overly dominant or unduly prominent within the existing vibrant, commercial streetscene.
19. For these reasons, I find that the proposed development would have a neutral effect on the character, appearance and significance of the CA.
20. In terms of Appeal A, the proposal would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the area, including the Historic City Conservation Area. Accordingly, it complies with Policies SWDPR09, SWDPR28 and SWDPR33 of the SWDPR. Together these policies seek to secure high-quality design that responds positively to its context and conserves or enhances heritage assets.
21. In terms of Appeal B, and owing to the adverts being acceptable and an integral part of the hub installation, it would not cause harm to visual amenity and thus it would comply with the Regulations.

Archaeology – Appeal A

22. The proposed development is located within an archaeologically sensitive area.
23. The National Planning Policy Framework advises that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. Policies SWDPR09 and SWDPR33 are consistent with the Framework

in seeking to conserve and enhance heritage assets, including assets of potential archaeological interest.

24. No desk-based assessment of archaeology potential at the site has been submitted. However, the appellant has provided details of the proposal's foundation requirements, which involve the installation of a foundation cage and rods with a depth of approximately 400 – 450mm, over an area of circa 2sqm. As such, very limited excavation is required with ground disturbance likely to be minimal and confined to an area that has also been subject to past ground works.
25. Subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring the approval of an archaeological field survey, including safeguarding measures, and an associated compliance condition, I am satisfied that there would be no unacceptable impacts upon archaeology. The appeal scheme therefore complies with Policies SWDPR09 and SWDPR33.

Other Matters

26. The appeal site lies within the setting of several listed buildings nearby, notably, 97A, 98, 102, 103, 104/104A and 106 High Street (all Grade II Listed). From my observations, the significance of the buildings lie in their age and architectural interest, whilst they form an important visual framework at this key thoroughfare within the city centre. Their setting within a generally high-quality public realm also positively contributes to their significance.
27. Although the site is located some distance from the Cathedral Church of Christ and St Mary (Worcester Cathedral) (Grade I listed), a degree of intervisibility remains, allowing for partial long-range views between the proposal and Worcester Cathedral. Given this visual relationship, together with the likely shared historic association with the High Street, the proposed development is considered to fall within the Cathedral's setting.
28. The significance of the Cathedral largely lies in its age, status as a landmark building of exemplar architectural quality, as well as its storied past and cultural significance. Its historic associations with the city including its setting alongside the River Severn and near the heart of the city centre also provide an important contribution to its significance.
29. The proposed development would be visible in association with the nearby listed buildings; however, its slim profile would result largely in oblique views that are likely to be transient in nature. Such views would be partially filtered by and/or seen alongside existing mature vegetation, street furniture and other modern streetscape elements. In respect of Worcester Cathedral, the experience of the asset and views towards it would be further moderated by an intervening main road, traffic, commercial buildings and various signage. Given that the setting of the listed buildings is already highly characterised by a busy commercial environment with modern signage and street furniture, the proposal would have a neutral effect on their setting and significance.

30. The Council has referred to very recent appeal decisions within Worcester city centre where street hubs were dismissed¹. I have reviewed the Inspectors' decisions but do not have the full background to those cases. Based on the available evidence and my own observations, I consider there to be clear contextual differences with the current proposal. For example, the appeals relating to the footpath outside the Premier Inn at County Ground were in a less commercial part of the city centre, where advertisements appear less prevalent. The proposals were also found to harm the setting of the Listed Worcester Bridge.
31. Similarly, although the appeals relating to the footpath outside 2 Chapel Walk are on a neighbouring street, that location does not share the same wide and spacious character as the High Street and appears to contain less street furniture. As a result, a street hub at that location would likely appear more dominant and intrusive. In addition, I do not have the full background details of the archaeological evidence considered in those appeals.
32. Accordingly, while those appeals share several similarities with the proposal before me, I consider that site-specific contextual differences justify a different conclusion in this case.
33. Various other appeal decisions have also been cited by main parties to support their respective cases. However, these relate to other towns/cities, whereby the precise contexts would have also differed to that before me. As such, they have not influenced my findings, which are based on the individual circumstances and site-specific context of the appeal schemes.
34. The appellant has indicated a willingness to remove a further telephone kiosk located within another part of the city centre, suggesting that this could be secured via the use of a planning condition. Notwithstanding that the other telephone kiosk is outside the redline boundary for the appeal scheme, I have not found its removal to be necessary to allow for the approval of the appeals.

Conditions

35. For Appeal A, in addition to the standard time-limit for commencement of development, I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans/drawings for clarity and certainty. A pre-commencement condition and compliance condition in relation to archaeology is also needed to safeguard potential heritage assets.
36. For Appeal B, the consent is granted subject to the five standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulations. I have also imposed conditions regulating the displays to safeguard visual amenity.

Conclusion

37. For the reasons outlined above, and having regard to all matters raised, the appeals are allowed subject to the conditions I have referred to.

Lewis Condé
INSPECTOR

¹ Linked appeals: APP/D1835/W/25/3375808 & APP/D1835/H/25/3375751 at Grid Ref Easting: 384606, Grid Ref Northing: 254713 Footpath outside Premier Inn County Ground, New Road, Worcester WR2 4RL; and linked appeals APP/D1835/W/25/3376030 & APP/D1835/H/25/3375807 at Grid Ref Easting: 385098, Grid Ref Northing: 254847 Footpath Outside 2 Chapel Walk, 1 Reindeer Court, Worcester WR1 2DS.

Schedule of Conditions – Appeal A Ref: APP/D1835/W/25/3376719

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers:
 - Street Hub WOR-03, 001 – Existing Site Plan
 - Street Hub WOR-03, 002 – Proposed Site Plan
 - Street Hub WOR-03, 004 – Proposed Site Elevations
- 3) No development shall take place until:
 - (i) An archaeological field evaluation has been carried out in accordance with a specification and timetable that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; and
 - (ii) Safeguarding measures to ensure the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording identified in the archaeological field evaluation have been undertaken in accordance with a specification and timetable that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority
- 4) No development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 3.

Schedule of Conditions – Appeal B Ref: APP/D1835/H/25/3376686

- 1) The intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens shall not exceed 600 candelas per square metre (cd/m²) between dusk (local sunset time) and dawn (local sunrise time) in line with the maximum permitted recommended luminance as set out by 'The Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements'.
- 2) The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds.
- 3) The interval between each piece of content on the digital display screens shall take place over a period no greater than one second; the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays and the display will include a mechanism to freeze the image in the event of a malfunction.
- 4) No individual advertisement displayed shall contain any moving or apparently moving images.