



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 12 May 2026

by **C Evans MTCP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd June 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/R0660/W/25/3377136

Footpath outside 47-49 Grove Street, Wilmslow SK9 1DT

- 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 Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/3881/FUL.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1 No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/R0660/H/25/3376880

Footpath outside 47-49 Grove Street, Wilmslow SK9 1DT

- 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 Cheshire East Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/3880/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is described as "installation of 1 No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit".
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. Both appeals relate to the same site. I have dealt with them on the basis that planning permission is being sought for a BT street hub unit and that advertisement consent is being sought for the integrated advertisement panels. Each appeal has been considered on its own merits, but as they are intrinsically linked and raise related issues, I have combined them into a single decision letter.
4. In respect of Appeal B, the Regulations require decisions regarding advertisements to be made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, whilst taking any material considerations into account. The Advertisements Planning Practice Guidance notes amenity can include visual and / or aural amenity. The Council has referred to various development plan policies, which I have taken into account. However, they have not been decisive in my determination of Appeal B.

Main Issue

5. The main issue for Appeal A is the effect of the proposed BT street hub on the character and appearance of the area. The main issue for Appeal B is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area. These main issues are related and so I have dealt with them together to avoid duplication.

Reasons

6. Grove Street is one of the main shopping streets located in the Primary Shopping Area of Wilmslow town centre. Properties are mostly two-storey of a modest scale, with commercial uses on the ground floor. Fascia signs are present, but there is little other signage, particularly illuminated advertisements. At the time of my site visit, Grove Street, which is relatively narrow, was pedestrianised.
7. The appeal site is a small area, which is differentiated from other parts of the street by the surface brickwork design. Street trees and furniture, including traditional planters, benches, a lamppost, a bin and cycle racks are located in this area. Their regular spacing provides a rhythm and, in combination with the street trees, contribute positively towards the character of the area. There are also various A-board and other freestanding signs from nearby businesses in the wider street scene.
8. The combined width and height of the proposed hub would appear as a bulky and visually prominent structure in this area. This prominence would be further heightened by the illuminated digital displays. It would have a modern design, which would jar with the traditional character of the area. As a result, the proposal would appear as an incongruous addition that would undermine the character of the area.
9. The proposed hub would be sited between two trees, which offer some screening, however, it would be clearly seen from various points along Grove Street due to its large size. It would also disrupt the rhythm and spacing between various items of street furniture in this location. Consequently, despite being sited in-line with existing furniture, it would not integrate well with it. The proposal would add clutter, which would be detrimental to the street scene.
10. Whilst this is a commercial area and there are various signs and adverts, these are mostly associated with and contained to the businesses occupying their respective units. The A-board and other freestanding signs are not permanent additions. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) notes that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited. The location of the proposed illuminated displays in relation to fascia and window signs in nearby commercial units would contribute towards a proliferation of advertisements in the area. As a result, it would harm the area's visual amenity.
11. I recognise that street scenes evolve over time, however, digital advertisements are not a common feature of this commercial area, particularly freestanding ones. As a result, the illuminated digital displays would be visually intrusive and would jar with the pleasant street scene in this location, harming visual amenity.
12. The appellant has made reference to an existing digital advertisement on Alderley Road, however, this is some distance from the appeal site and so does not form

part of the immediate context that is relevant in these appeals. I therefore give this factor little weight.

13. The level of brightness, hours of illumination and frequency of image change could be controlled via a planning condition. However, this would not overcome the harm to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area from the size and prominence of the illuminated displays.
14. For Appeal A, for the reasons highlighted above, I conclude that the proposed BT street hub would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (adopted 2017) (CELPS) policies SD1, SD2 and SE1; and Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (adopted 2022) (CESADPD) policies GEN1 and RET9, which collectively, amongst other things, require development to contribute positively, reflect, protect and enhance local character and create high quality places. Policy RET9 also requires development to avoid clutter in town centres.
15. For Appeal B, I conclude that the proposal would harm the visual amenity of the area. I have taken into account CELPS policies SD1, SD2 and SE1; CESADPD policies GEN1, GEN3; and RET9, and Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan policy PR1, which seek to ensure high design standards, for development to contribute positively, to reflect, protect and enhance the local character and improve the public realm, including visual amenity. Given my conclusion above, the proposal conflicts with these policies.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

16. The proposed hub would provide various benefits, including wi-fi, access to public services and helplines, device charging, potential extended 4G and 5G coverage and could help the local Council to achieve social and economic improvement and sustainability goals. Whilst these benefits weigh in favour of the proposed hub and would contribute towards the Framework's objectives for communication infrastructure and the environment, they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified above to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area.
17. The appellant contends that should this appeal be allowed, it would result in the removal of a BT phone box on Bank Square. This is bulkier in appearance than the proposed hub. Whilst this may provide some benefit to the street scene, pedestrian movement and useability of the space for events in that location, it is some distance from the appeal site. The removal of a phone box in a different area would not justify the harm highlighted above that the proposed hub would have at the appeal site.
18. The appellant has drawn my attention to various appeal decisions for proposals for other BT street hubs. I am required to determine this appeal on the basis of its own merits, however, I have reviewed each appeal. Several refer to the removal of one or two existing payphones and their direct replacement with a kiosk or hub (refs: APP/Z5630/W/18/3209582 and APP/Z5630/H/18/3209488; APP/Q4245/W/25/3363942 and APP/Q4245/H/25/3363943; APP/J2373/W/22/3304941; APP/J2373/H/22/3305026 and APP/J2373/W/22/3305028; and APP/J2373/H/22/3305072 and APP/J2373/W/22/3305075). Consequently, installing a kiosk or hub at these appeal sites would not have increased the number of structures or clutter.

19. Other appeals were for advertisement consent only, where a kiosk and smaller advertisement were already consented (refs: APP/N5090/Z/22/3296138 and APP/N5090/Z/21/3287033). One appeal site is described as a major thoroughfare in front of a large commercial complex (ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3363934 and APP/Q4245/H/25/3363936). It does not appear to be a similar area in character to that of this appeal site.
20. I am therefore not persuaded that these appeals are directly comparable to those before me. Consequently, I give these decisions limited weight.

Conclusion

21. For Appeal A, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above Appeal A should be dismissed.
22. For the reasons given above Appeal B should also be dismissed.

C Evans

INSPECTOR