



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 May 2026

by **S Ramsden BSc (Hons) MA MA IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/E5330/W/25/3375007

Powis Street, Outside no.37 Shaba Hair and Cosmetics, London SE18 6HZ

- 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 Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application reference is 25/0939/F.
 - The development proposed is the removal of an existing InLink Unit, and the deployment of a replacement Street Hub 3 unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/E5330/Z/25/3374853

Powis Street, Outside no.37 Shaba Hair and Cosmetics, London SE18 6HZ

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 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 Royal Borough of Greenwich.
 - The application reference is 25/0940/A.
 - The development proposed is the removal of an existing InLink Unit, and the deployment of a replacement Street Hub 3 unit.
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Decision

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. 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.
3. In respect of Appeal B, the Advertisement Regulations require that decisions are made only in the interest of amenity (which can include visual and/or aural amenity) and public safety. As set out in the reasons for refusal, the Council has identified impacts on visual amenity and pedestrian safety as being relevant matters. Whilst I have taken account of the policies to which the Council refers insofar as they may be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of this appeal.
4. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of

preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) 2024 states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

5. I understand public realm improvements were undertaken in Powis Street, around the time of the submission and assessment of the applications. The drawings submitted at application stage reflect the previous public realm arrangement; however, the appellant has submitted amended drawings, as part of the appeal, which show the amended streetscape. The proposal is otherwise the same and the Council and other interested parties have had the opportunity to make further comment in light of the amended drawings. Consequently, there would be no procedural unfairness if I were to accept the amended plans and I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are therefore:
 - the effect of the proposal on the visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Woolwich Conservation Area (the Conservation Area); and,
 - the effect of the proposal on public safety, with particular reference to pedestrian movement.

Reasons

Visual amenity/Character and appearance/Conservation Area

7. The appeal site is located in a pedestrianised area of Powis Street, in the Woolwich Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document (the Character Appraisal) (2022) describes the area as a fine collection of commercial, civic, cultural, co-operative and ecclesiastical buildings, which along with its public spaces illustrates the development of the area from a historic market town into a thriving civic and commercial centre. The Conservation Area's significance as a heritage asset is therefore both architectural and historic.
8. Powis Street is within the commercial core of the Conservation Area and is a long, straight, historic high street with a mixture of Victorian, Edwardian and modern buildings to either side. The buildings are predominantly three storey in scale, and provide a continuous frontage, with shopfronts to the ground floor. Views are therefore focused along the street, and the linearity is emphasised by rows of street trees and the arrangement of street furniture and hard and soft landscaping. The public realm that surrounds the appeal site therefore makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area's architectural and historic significance.
9. The Conservation Area is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, and the Character Appraisal identifies poor quality public realm and superfluous street clutter as key issues in the Conservation Area.
10. As noted above, significant streetscape improvements have recently been undertaken along Powis Street and surrounding streets; with the area now having

a high-quality, largely unified and well-designed public realm. The appeal site contains an InLink unit, which provides a range of publicly available digital services and has digital advertisements to either side. The unit sits within a cluster of new benches, a litter bin, low level planters and established street trees.

11. There are other advertisements along Powis Street, but they are largely limited to shopfronts and fascia signage, which are in proportion to the scale of the facades of the buildings which host them. Whilst I observed two other hub-type units further towards the west end of Powis Street they are some distance from the appeal site. The public realm is otherwise devoid of free-standing advertisements.
12. The proposed Street Hub would be a direct replacement for the current InLink unit. The existing unit is smaller and more slender than the proposed Hub and tapers slightly towards the ground. It has smaller digital advertisement displays than those of the proposed Hub, and has a grey metal surround, which echoes to some extent the metal fittings of the nearby, recently installed street furniture. The InLink unit predates designation of the Woolwich Conservation Area in 2019.
13. The proposed Hub would be wider and deeper than the existing unit and, with its rectangular black surround, it would be less well-integrated with the new street furniture and would appear more visually bulky and prominent in the immediate street scene and in contained views along Powis Street. The larger internally illuminated digital advertisement screens would further increase its incongruous nature in the street scene, particularly given the absence of free-standing advertisements in the immediate vicinity. The proposal would therefore conflict with the objectives set out in the Character Appraisal which, amongst other things, seek to promote a high quality public realm and reduce the impact of street clutter.
14. Consequently, the proposed development would harm the visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. Notwithstanding the comments from the Council's conservation officer, I find that it would also harm the significance of the Conservation Area as a historic high street. This would be through the introduction of a larger and more prominent element in the street scene, contributing to street clutter and visually distracting from the historic buildings in the vicinity. Due to the existing unit at the appeal site, the harm to the Conservation Area from the change would be at the lower end of less than substantial harm.
15. National planning policy seeks to secure high quality design and advises that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built environment. In addition to the specific advice relating to advertisements, Chapter 16 of the Framework sets out Government policy in relation to the historic environment. Paragraph 202 states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, which includes conservation areas, requires clear and convincing justification.
16. The appellant has referenced a number of considerations in support of Appeal A, including the provision of improved and cost-free digital connectivity for the local community such as wi-fi and UK calls, together with phone charging ability, wayfinding assistance and an emergency services button. Additional digital services are also cited as supporting economic growth and productivity. Safeguarding benefits have also been raised where charity phone lines could be

accessed from the installation. However, the existing InLink unit provides many of these services, so the public benefits of the additional services provided by the replacement installation would be minor in nature.

17. In accordance with the Framework, I ascribe great weight to the conservation of the Conservation Area as a heritage asset and, by extension, to the harm to its significance that I have identified. 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. There is therefore no clear and convincing justification for the harm to the Conservation Area, and the public benefits ascribed to the proposed development would not outweigh the harm identified.
18. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would harm the visual amenity, character and appearance of the area, and would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Woolwich Conservation Area. It would therefore conflict with Policies DH1, DH3, DH(e), DH(f) and DH(h) of the Council's Local Plan¹ (the Local Plan), which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that advertisements are designed to be an unobtrusive part of the character and appearance of the area and that they would conserve and protect designated heritage assets such as conservation areas.
19. For the same reasons, the proposed development would conflict with Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021), which seek to deliver high quality design which is responsive to local character and conserves the significance of heritage assets.

Public safety/Pedestrian movement

20. Although wider than the existing InLink unit, the proposed Street Hub would occupy a similar position within the streetscape and have a similar physical relationship with the surrounding street furniture. The gap between the Hub and the adjacent litter bin would be reduced to around 0.7m, which would restrict pedestrian movement at that point. However, given the width of the pedestrianised street and the availability of alternative routes, it would not have a significant or unacceptable impact on pedestrian movement.
21. Vehicular traffic is allowed along Powis Street outside daytime hours, and the appeal site is to one side of the area defined in the hard landscaping for vehicles. It is also surrounded by other street furniture. The increase in width of the Street Hub, in comparison to the existing unit, would not have a marked impact on pedestrian movement, such as forcing them significantly closer to the area defined for use by vehicles. Given this, and that vehicular traffic is limited to outside daytime hours when pedestrian use of the area would be much reduced, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on pedestrian safety.
22. For these reasons, the proposal would have an acceptable effect on public safety with particular reference to pedestrian movement. It would not, therefore, conflict with Policies IM(b) and IM4 of the Local Plan or with Policies T2 and T4 of the London Plan, which taken together seek to ensure development is designed for the needs of pedestrians and does not increase road danger.

¹ The Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies, 2014

Conclusion

23. Although I have found no harm to public safety, the harms I have found to visual amenity, character and appearance and the significance of the Conservation Area are determinative. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole and having regard to other matters, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
24. For the reasons given above Appeal B should also be dismissed.

S Ramsden

INSPECTOR