



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2026

by A O'Neill BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 August 2026.

Appeal A Ref: 6006742

Footpath Outside 5 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2BD

- 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 Global Outdoor Media Limited against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03853/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a BT Street Hub Unit with advertisement panels.
-

Appeal B Ref: 6006740

Footpath Outside 5 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2BD

- 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 Global Outdoor Media Limited against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03854/ADV.
 - The advertisement proposed is the installation of a BT Street Hub Unit with advertisement panels.
-

Decision

1. Appeals A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address above is taken from the appeal form which is the same as the decision notice. This more accurately describes the site location than the address given in the application form.
3. The description of the proposal above is taken from the decision notice, and the appellant's submissions indicate that they have agreed to this change. The description given on the application form refers to the relocation and replacement of an existing telephone kiosk in Mary's Street, which does not reflect the plans before me. Furthermore, the appellant's Planning Statement states that the proposed Street Hub would not require the removal of a BT phone box. I have considered the appeals accordingly.
4. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed Street Hub unit. Appeal B is in respect to the refusal of an associated advertisement consent which would be an integral part of the proposed Street Hub under Appeal A. I have considered both on their individual merits, but as they raise similar issues, I have combined these cases into a single decision letter.
5. In respect of both appeals, the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires

special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area (CA).

6. In respect of Appeal A, Section 66(1) of the Act requires special regard be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.
7. In respect of Appeal B, Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) state that advertisements should be subject to control 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.
8. The Council's reason for refusal in relation to Appeal B relates specifically to matters of amenity. There was no objection raised on the grounds of public safety, and I find no reason to take a different view on that matter.

Main Issues

9. Having regard to the above, the main issue in relation to Appeal A is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area including the Shrewsbury Town Centre CA and the setting of nearby listed buildings. The main issue in relation to Appeal B is the effect of the proposal on visual amenity.

Reasons

10. The appeal site comprises a section of footpath on the north-west side of Castle Street. The site lies within the Shrewsbury Town Centre CA, which encompasses the civic and commercial centre of the town. Whilst I appreciate that the Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area Special Character Area Assessment (2001) is somewhat dated, it helpfully identifies that the medieval and Georgian architecture evident throughout the area are key components of the CA's special architectural and historic interest. As I saw during my site visit, there are concentrations of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets displaying these characteristics which contributes significantly to the significance of the CA.
11. Castle Street is not specifically referenced within the Assessment, but I observed during my visit that the area surrounding the appeal site is characterised predominantly by three and four storey historic commercial buildings with active ground-floor uses and a mixture of traditional and modern shopfronts. A number of Grade II listed buildings are situated in close proximity to the appeal site, including Nos. 1-2, 13 and 14 Castle Street on the same side of the road, and Nos. 24, 35-35A, 36 and 37-38 Castle Street on the opposite side of the road.
12. The listed buildings comprise former houses and shops dating principally from the Georgian period. Numbers 1-2 and 37-38A Castle Street, dated 1723, are representative of that period and display characteristic features including brick construction, sash windows, gauged brick window heads, string courses and parapets. Numbers 13, dating from around 1750, 35-35A, from the later eighteenth century, and 36, from the mid eighteenth century, also have Georgian character, with brick façades, sash windows and parapeted rooflines. Numbers 14 and 34 are later additions, dating from the early and mid-nineteenth century respectively, and reflect Regency remodelling and Victorian architectural influences.

13. The significance and special interest of these listed buildings lie not only in their individual architectural interest, but also in their collective value as evidence of the evolution of Castle Street as an important commercial thoroughfare. Taken together, they make a strong positive contribution to the significance, appearance and historic character of this part of the Shrewsbury Town Centre CA.
14. The site is within a commercial area, but I did not observe any illuminated shop signage or other illuminated or digital signage in the immediate area. Street furniture in the vicinity of the appeal site is limited. At the time of my site visit, three low, timber planters were positioned along the edge of the footway to the south-west of the appeal site. To the north-west of the site were two small timber bollards displaying parking restrictions and a modest cycle stand. All these features have either low or slimline proportions which creates a street environment with a relatively open visual character. The existing street furniture is visually unobtrusive in the context of the CA and the surrounding listed buildings.
15. In contrast, the proposed Street Hub would have a bulkier appearance which would be at odds with the slenderer proportions of the existing street furniture in the area. The combination of the width and height of the street hub would create a highly prominent and discordant feature within the street scene. The gloss black finish to the hub and the associated digital advertisements on either side would give it an overtly contemporary appearance. This would exacerbate its prominence in the context of the surrounding historic environment and create a harmful visual intrusion for users of the area. Whilst the Street Hub would be subordinate in scale to the buildings which surround it, it would have a dominating appearance in the context of the surrounding street furniture which is lower in height and smaller in bulk.
16. Consequently, the proposed Street Hub by virtue of its size and design, would constitute an incongruous structure which would result in additional visual clutter within the street scene, adversely impacting on the amenity and visual appearance of the area. It would also undermine the rich historic architectural character of this part of the CA including the setting of the listed buildings.
17. In view of the limited scale of the proposal, I find the harm to the CA and the listed buildings to be at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial, but nonetheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation, and paragraph 215 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.
18. Cited benefits of the proposal include that it would provide free public Wi-Fi, emergency calling facilities, and device charging, supporting digital inclusion and accessibility for residents, workers, and visitors. The Street Hub would offer the community, the Council and businesses access to local digital advertising space. It could also be fitted with sensors to monitor air quality, noise and traffic and would be powered by renewable carbon-free energy. I accept that street environments evolve over time and that these Street Hubs and similar free-standing units are commonplace in many streets throughout the country. I also appreciate that, in appropriate locations, they can contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres.

19. However, even acknowledging the support in the Framework for high quality communications and next generation mobile technology, these public benefits would be very modest and attract moderate weight in the planning balance. Consequently, the identified benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets, to which I attribute significant weight. This negative conclusion to the heritage balance is a material consideration.
20. With regard to Appeal A, for these reasons, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance and visual amenity of the area, would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Shrewsbury Town Centre CA, and would fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed buildings. It would consequently conflict with Policies CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011) and Policies MD2 and MD13 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015). Together these policies require, amongst other things, for development to respect local distinctiveness, taking account of local context and character, including scale and proportion, and to conserve and enhance the historic environment, avoiding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.
21. The reason for refusal cites conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS3. This policy concerns the Market Towns and other Key Centres in Shropshire, which does not include Shrewsbury. Accordingly, I find no direct conflict with this policy. Although not cited in the reason for refusal, my attention has been drawn to Core Strategy Policy CS2 which sets out the development strategy for Shrewsbury. The policy identifies that Shrewsbury will develop its role as Shropshire's primary retail, office and commercial centre but also recognises the special character of the town and so requires development to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of its heritage assets. Accordingly, for the reasons set out above, Appeal A would conflict with Policy CS2 in this regard.
22. With regard to Appeal B, the same considerations apply as those relating to the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the illuminated displays would add to the harm to the visual amenities of the area already identified above. For similar reasons it would conflict with the above development plan policies insofar as they are material.

Conclusion

23. The proposed development, insofar as it relates to Appeal A, would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole, and would not meet the requirements of the Framework. The material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed.
24. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed.

A O'Neill

INSPECTOR