

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

APPLICATION REF. NOS:	25/01103/FUL & 25/01104/ADV
APPEAL REF. NOS	6002910 & 6002912
LOCATION:	Footpath east of The Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington DL1 5RP
DESCRIPTION:	Installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
APPLICANT:	BT Group PLC

PLANNING OFFICER: ANDREW HARKER

BRIEF SUMMARY:

1. Advertisement consent and planning permission were both refused for the installation of a BT Street Hub Unit with advertisement panels on either side. The Hub was located within the pavement to the east of the Dolphin Centre (and to the front of the Town Hall building)

KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

2. The Hub would be located close to, but outside of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

REASON(S) FOR REFUSAL:

3. Planning application reference number 25/01103/FUL was refused on the grounds that the Hub would have an adverse impact on the character of the local environment and street scene and would not positively respond to local context in terms of its scale, siting and appearance. The Hub would be visually intrusive and form an incongruous and alien feature within the street scene, resulting in a prominent and overbearing structure which is out of character with its surroundings and the relative openness of the street.
4. Advertisement consent reference number 25/01102/ADV was refused as the proposed display panels were considered to be an incongruous form of advertising, which would harm the general character and amenity of the streetscape by virtue of their scale, appearance and siting.

APPEAL DISMISSED:

5. The Planning Inspector considered that the Hub would be a prominent feature at the point where Feethams opens up into the Market Square in front of the Town Hall, especially for anyone heading south on that side of the street. It would introduce a degree of clutter into a part of the town centre otherwise characterised by a sense of relative spaciousness. The Planning Inspector also considered that while there is a small amount of illuminated signage on the Dolphin Centre and the Vue cinema complex at the southern end of Feethams, the street is otherwise largely free of advertising and there are no advertisements on the two existing bus shelters nearby. The introduction of two digital display screens would be at odds with the generally restrained and “municipal” character of the site’s immediate surroundings.
6. The appeal decision concludes that the proposed installation would be harmful to the character and appearance, or to the visual amenity of, the area. The Planning Inspector had regard to the benefits of the scheme which had been presented as part of the process, including increased mobile communications connectivity, the use of the digital display screens for public information messages and the removal of existing kiosks in the Town Centre Conservation Area, but they did not outweigh the harm that had been identified.