

Objection by Bristol Walking Alliance to proposed installation of further new BT Street Hub advertising signs in Bristol



Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) objects to the proposed installation of a further 20 BT Street Hub advertising signs to the detriment of the amenity and safety of Bristol.

The proposed BT Street Hub units are essentially the same as the units which were refused permission by the Council in 2022. A few of these applications are also in almost the same locations as previous applications. We believe the same reasons for refusal should apply to all of these applications.

We object to these installations for their obstructive siting, their visual effect on safety and the public realm and their potential for invasion of privacy. Each of these general objections is outlined in the following sections. Specific issues with individual sites are noted in the subsequent table.

Because of the prevalence of mobile phones, the demand for street phones is negligible. For the phone functions of the proposed units, their use will be inconvenienced by lack of shelter and privacy for the user, and in many of the applications by adjacent road noise.

Obstruction

Their intended purpose is for the advertising revenue they could bring to the applicant. Their siting is on busy pavements around the city where pedestrian numbers are high and where walking is encouraged as a sustainable mode of travel. Bristol Walking Alliance objects to the installation of any unnecessary pavement furniture on the functional grounds that it limits the free flow of pedestrian movement and is detrimental to safety. Pavement obstacles are a particular hazard to those with impaired vision.

The submitted plans are misleading in the amount of space required. The phone is situated on the edge of the monolith, so anyone using the phone will occupy additional pavement space, adding a further (say) 0.5m to the effective width of the monolith.

Visual impact

We also object to these monoliths on appearance grounds. Their excessive size is due purely to their advertising potential, since the wifi and 5G functionality could be provided on a simple pole.

Advertising, by its nature, is designed to grab the attention of those who are sighted. It can therefore distract the attention of pavement users, or road users, presenting a potential safety hazard to those navigating their way along, across or beside roads. This may be particularly true for modern, brightly illuminated, changing display panels.

Given that their key visual impact is the presentation of advertising, their excessive size is detrimental to the overall streetscape and to the amenity and enjoyment of the urban scene for all. This is particularly the case for those sited in conservation areas.

Privacy

The BT Street Hub monoliths each include video cameras, capable of monitoring activity in the street. This introduces the potential for increased surveillance and invasion of privacy outside local authority control. Advertising companies, such as those involved with these applications, are already exploring the potential of facial recognition for measuring and adapting their messages to individuals.

Specific additional issues with individual sites

For each of the current set of applications, we highlight the additional issues with each site. The issues are as follows:

Pavement obstruction: The proposed position of the BT Street Hub introduces an obstruction into the middle of the pavement that will require pedestrians to alter their course around it. This is particularly a hazard for those with visual impairments. (Affects safety and amenity)

Driver distraction: The proposed position of the BT Street Hub is adjacent to a busy road and could distract drivers from awareness of road movements, including pedestrians crossing the road. (Affects safety)

Conservation area: The proposed BT Street Hub is sited in a conservation area to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area. (Affects amenity)

App. No.	Location	Additional issues
25/10436/F	Pavement Pavement O/s 30 Triangle West Bristol BS8 1ET	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing ; conservation area
25/10438/F	Pavement O/s Waitrose, 51 Northumbria Drive Bristol BS9 4HN	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing
25/10440/F	Pavement Outside 6 Broadmead Bristol BS1 3HH	Pavement obstruction
25/10442/F	Pavement opp Kingmarsh Way Lawrence Hill Bristol BS5 0BT	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a bus stop
25/10444/F	Pavement O/s Co-op, 60-64 Filton Road Bristol BS7 0PB	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing
25/10656/F	Pavement Outside 256 North Street Southville Bristol BS3 1JA	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a road junction
25/10658/F	Pavement Outside Of 161 Whiteladies Road Bristol BS8 2RF	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing ; conservation area
25/10660/F	Land Adjacent To Clifton Down Shopping Centre Whiteladies Road Bristol BS8 2NN	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a bus stop ; conservation area
25/10662/F	Pavement O/s 165 East Street Bedminster Bristol BS3 4EJ	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a busy road junction ; conservation area
25/10664/F	Land Adjacent To The PIT 101 - 106 Wells Road Totterdown Bristol BS4 2BS	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing and road junction
25/10666/F	Pavement Outside 171-173 Greystoke Avenue Bristol BS10 6AT	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction
25/10668/F	Pavement Outside 28 - 30 (Evens) The Horsefair Bristol BS1 3DS	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction
25/10672/F	Pavement O/S Beacon Tower 602-604 Fishponds Road Bristol BS16 3HQ	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction
25/10674/F	Pavement Outside Of 101-105 The Horsefair Bristol BS1 3JR	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction
25/10676/F	Pavement Outside 310 - 312 (Evens) Southmead Road Bristol BS10 5EN	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing and road junction
25/10678/F	Pavement Outside Sainsbury's Local 256 -	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a

	258 Gloucester Road Horfield Bristol BS7 8PB	pedestrian crossing and road junction
25/10680/F	Pavement Outside 52 - 62 Bond Street Bristol BS1 3LZ	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing
25/10722/F	Pavement At A38 Near Junction W/ St. James Barton Roundabout Bristol BS1 3PR	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a road junction
25/10724/F	Pavement Adjacent Colston Tower Colston Avenue Bristol BS1 4UB	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction; conservation area
25/10726/F	Pavement O/s 1 Canons Road Bristol BS1 5TX	Pavement obstruction; driver distraction – near a pedestrian crossing ; conservation area

Additional advertising considerations

As well as objecting to the siting, visual impact and privacy implications of these units, we believe Bristol City Council should also refuse to approve the use of advertising on these units if such advertising would not have deemed assent, for example because advertisements would be illuminated or would appear on more than one face of the unit, or if in a conservation area.

We also believe that the applicant's request for consent for 10 years is out of line with the normal practice of giving consent for a 5 year period, after which approval could be reviewed if necessary.

As such, we also object to the 20 associated advertising consent applications:

25/10437/A, 25/10439/A, 25/10441/A, 25/10443/A, 25/10445/A, 25/10657/A, 25/10659/A, 25/10661/A, 25/10663/A, 25/10665/A, 25/10667/A, 25/10669/A, 25/10673/A, 25/10675/A, 25/10677/A, 25/10679/A, 25/10681/A, 25/10723/A, 25/10725/A, 25/10727/A

Bristol Walking Alliance
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enquiries@bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk