

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	29/11/2021
		N/A	<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	29/11/2021
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Jennifer Dawson			1. 2021/3918/P 2. 2021/4378/A	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Drawing Numbers</b>	
Pavement o/s 132 Tottenham Court Road Tottenham Court Road London W1T 5AZ			Refer to draft decision notice	
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
1. The installation of 1no. new BT Street Hub, incorporating 75" LCD advert screens plus the removal of associated BT kiosks. 2. Display of 1 x LCD illuminated digital advertisement panel to new phone hub unit.				
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	1. Refuse Planning Permission 2. Refuse Advertisement Consent			
<b>Application Types:</b>	1. Planning Permission 2. Advertisement Consent			

Reason(s) for refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Consultations						
Adjoining occupiers and/or local residents/groups	No. notified	00	No. of responses	03	No. of objections	03

**Summary of  
consultation  
responses:**

In response to the proposal, the following comments/objections were received:

**Metropolitan Police:**

*In relation to the locations of the kiosks around Tottenham Court Road there is a common theme among the crime statistics. All these areas have a major issue with street crime and in particular antisocial behaviour, pickpocketing and theft from person. These are areas of significant footfall with both commuters, local residents and numerous tourists. The design of these kiosks does not reduce the risk of these types of crime from occurring. Due to the openness of the kiosk any mobile phones on display at this location (either in hand or on charge) will be vulnerable to the opportunist phone snatch. With the new locations mostly closer to the carriageway this form of crime can be carried out by moped or bicycle. The large façade where the advertising screen is proposed will act as an opportunity for concealment and increase the risk of theft and assault. The close proximity to the carriageway will mean that the advertising screens will be in full view of vehicles driving past. This will be a distraction and could lead to an increase in reported collisions along these stretches of road. During hours of darkness the illuminated screens will offer increased distractions as these adverts pop out. The other consideration should be safety of the user as well as other road users. Due to the close proximity to the carriageway and the lack of visual permeability through the kiosk persons could step into the road with little to no warning.*

*The new kiosk still has a large screen which can be used as a concealment opportunity. I am also concerned regarding the noise cancelling facility through the headphone port. This could mean that users of the hub might not hear persons approaching. This is a concern for safety. The other consideration should be safety of the user as well as other road users. Due to the close proximity to the carriageway and the lack of visual permeability through the kiosk persons could step into the road with little to no warning for a road user. The potential for road traffic collisions increases. Having the advertising screens in such close proximity to the carriageway could be a distraction for road users leading to an increase in reported collisions in the vicinity of these proposed inlink kiosks. The screens at night could cause drivers unnecessary glare. It is recommended that the advertising screen be switched off overnight.*

**Cllr Adam Harrison**

Would add to the street clutter and due to the location would be considered a safety risk.

This Kiosk is too close to the traffic signals and wider than the existing one being taken out reducing the footway width to an unacceptable level by this very busy transport hub (Bus stop and Warren Street station) they are taking out two side by side and so in reality its one in one out at the location.

**Charlotte street association**

These large (more than 1.2m wide and nearly 3m high) and intrusive advertising displays will directly face onto the flow of pedestrians on the footway, and also towards the drivers and cyclists on the carriageway, along Tottenham Court Road.

They will impede the flow of pedestrians and likely be a distraction to drivers and cyclists along the carriageway which could have a negative impact on road danger reduction.

They will introduce not only physical clutter due to their width but also brash visual clutter due to the illumination. Tottenham Court Road has a number of listed buildings and most of it is within a conservation area.

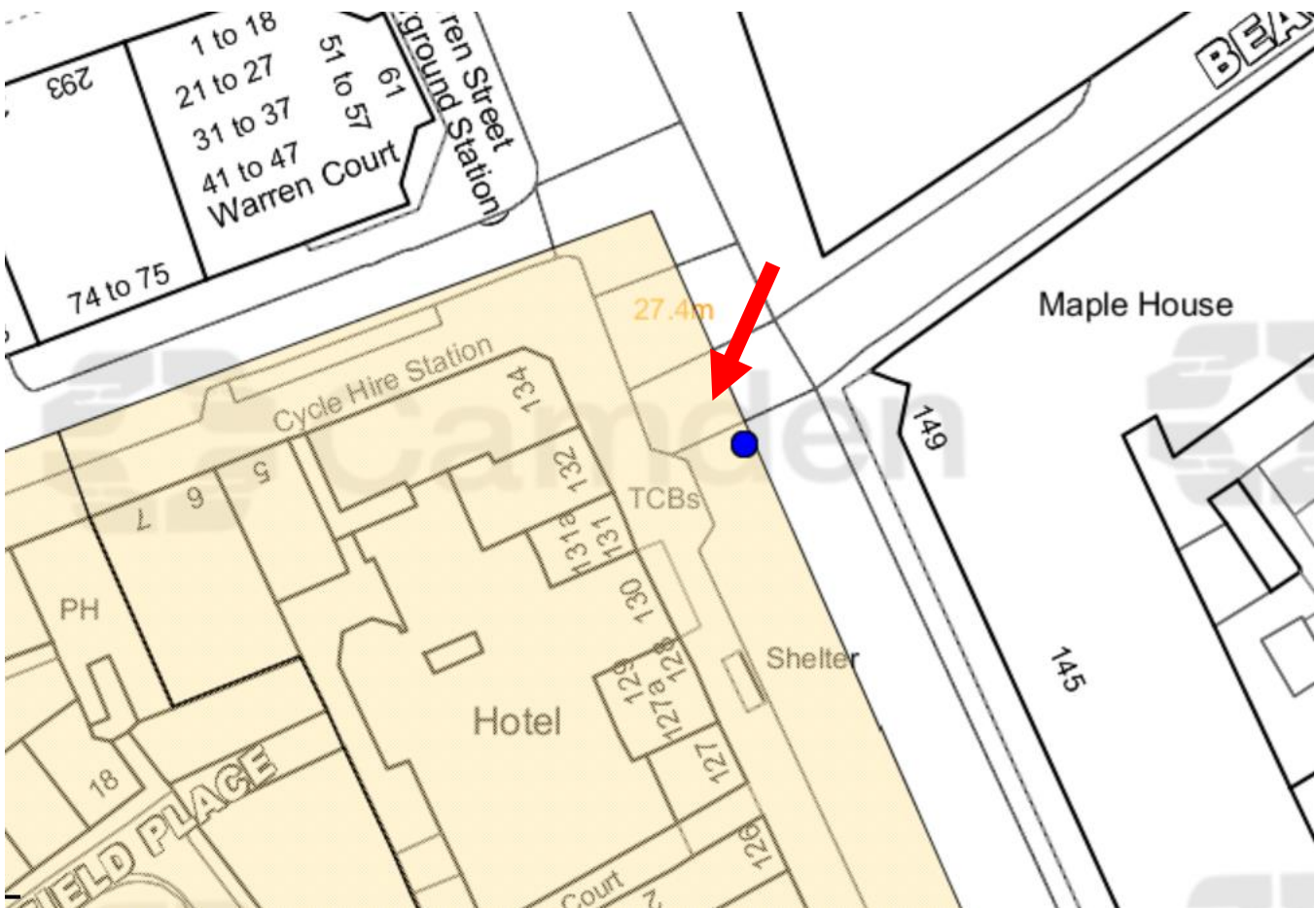
We also note the concerns raised by officers in the report to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee in November 2021 about the unexpected negative impacts of similar Phone hubs where they have "attracted anti-social behaviour" and the free phone hubs have been used for criminal activity. "These activities include increased instances of loitering, as well as usage of the free calls facility to coordinate drug deals," states the report of 9 November 2021.

While we welcome the proposed removal of the older phone boxes as part of the planning and advertising applications we are concerned that the proposals swap one form of unwanted street clutter for another - possibly worse - form of clutter.

There are already several and similar large double-side adverting panels that are part of the clutter and visual intrusion along this shopping street. The sheer number of the units proposed is completely over-the-top and any positive aspects with regard to providing some public information (only five percent of the time) is outweighed by the negative aspects.

### Site Description

The application site is located on the pavement along Tottenham court road. The site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation area. The proposed location is near the junction of Warren Street and a traffic signal on Tottenham Court Road.



Approximate location of the proposed Kiosk (Marked with Red Arrow)

## Relevant History

### Site history

Summary of phone kiosk applications since 2017 - Please refer to appendix A for full details

Year	Phone kiosk applications received	Phone kiosk advert applications received	Approved	Refused	Appeals received	Appeals allowed	Appeals dismissed
2017	140	52	26	90	0	0	0
2018	127	41	26	83	63	13	30
2019	43	17	1	20	50	4	50
2020	2	0	0	40	28	2	52
2021	32	10	1	12	0	0	0
2022	1	0	0	5	0	0	0

Figure 1. Phone kiosk applications by decision type (2017-2019)

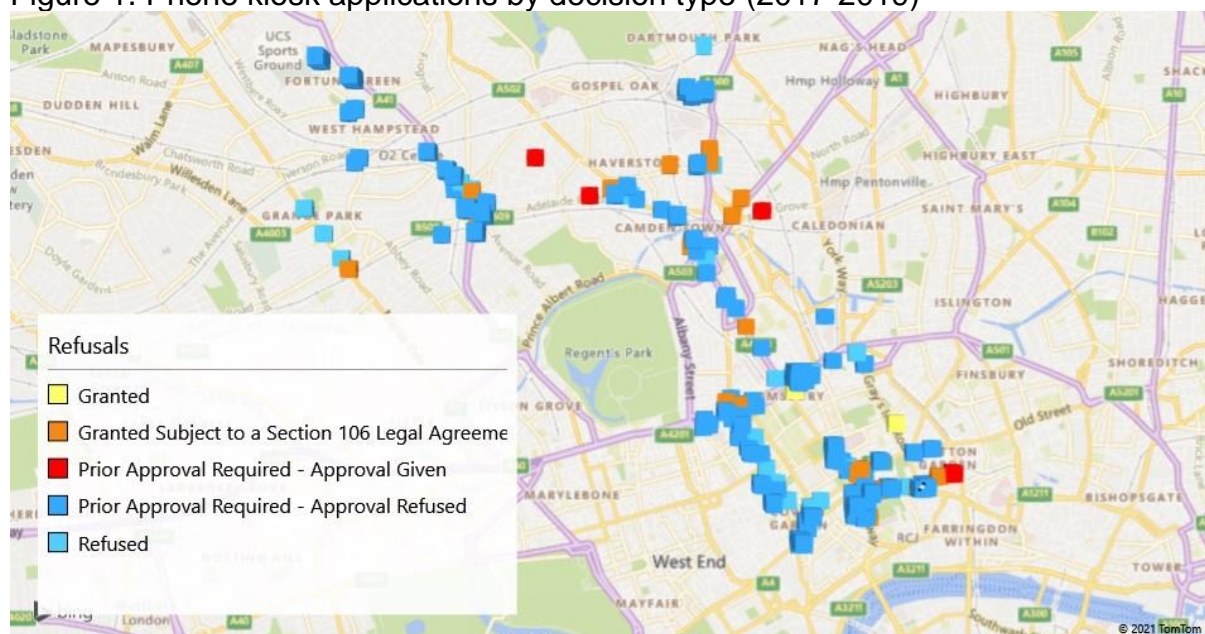
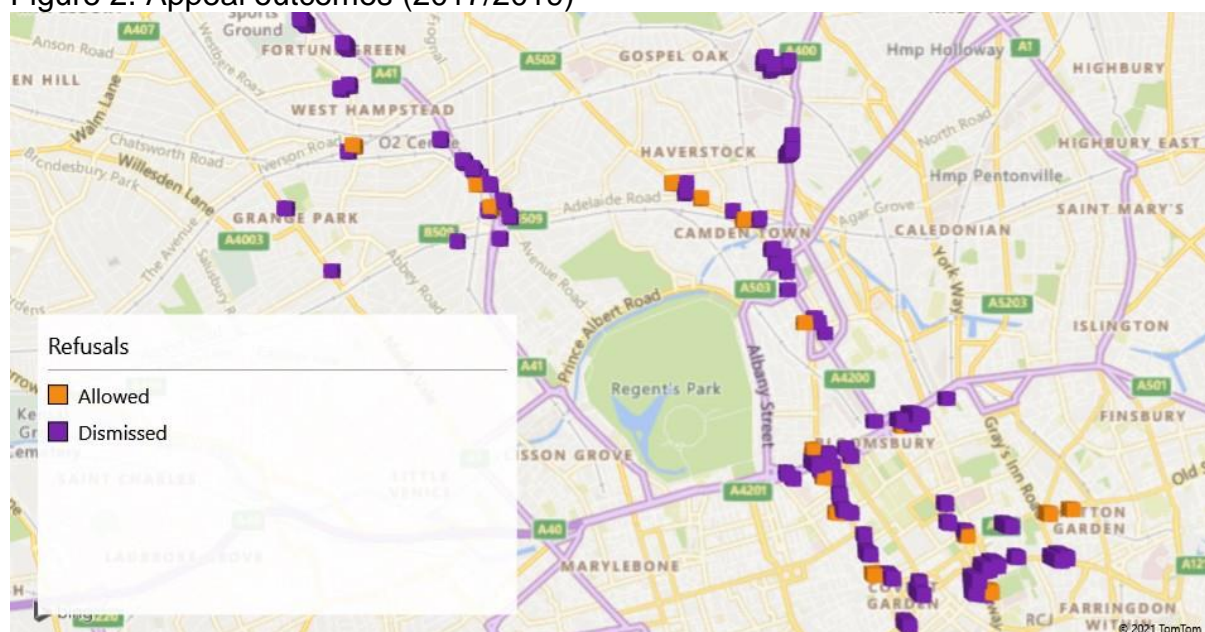


Figure 2. Appeal outcomes (2017/2019)



## **Relevant policies**

### **National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

### **London Plan (2021)**

### **TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London (2010)**

### **Camden Local Plan (2017)**

A1 Managing the impact of development

C5 Safety and Security

C6 Access

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

D4 Advertisements

G1 Delivery and location of growth

T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

### **Camden Planning Guidance**

CPG Design (2021) - chapters 2 (Design excellence), 3 (Heritage) and 7 (Designing safer environments)

CPG Transport (2021) - chapters 7 (Vehicular access and crossovers) and 9 (Pedestrian and cycle movement)

CPG Advertisements (2018) – paragraphs 1.1 to 1.15; and 1.34 to 1.38 (Digital advertisements)

CPG Amenity (2021) - chapter 4 (Artificial light)

### **Camden Streetscape Design Manual**

### **Digital Roadside Advertising and Proposed Best Practice (commissioned by Transport for London) March 2013**

### **Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. External environment - code of practice (BS8300-1:2018 and BS-2:2018)**

### **Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007**

### **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (ERR) 2013**

### **Fitzrovia Action Plan 2014**

### **Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2010**

## **Assessment**

### **3 Proposal**

3.1 It is proposed to install 1 x kiosk of an updated design following the removal of 2 older kiosks (shown below)





*Existing Kiosks to be removed on site (marked with red arrow) (New Kiosk location marked with yellow arrow)*



*The kiosk design subject of this application*

3.2 The proposal is to remove two existing kiosks which measure 0.9 metres wide and 2.5 metres high each. The proposed kiosk would be located nearby one of the existing kiosks and would measure 1.2 metres x 0.4 metres and be 3.0 metres high. The display screen would be 0.9 metres x 1.6 metres, which would take up most of the kiosk's façade. The screen would be powered using 100% renewable carbon-free energy and would emit a luminance level of 600 cd/m<sup>2</sup> during hours of darkness.

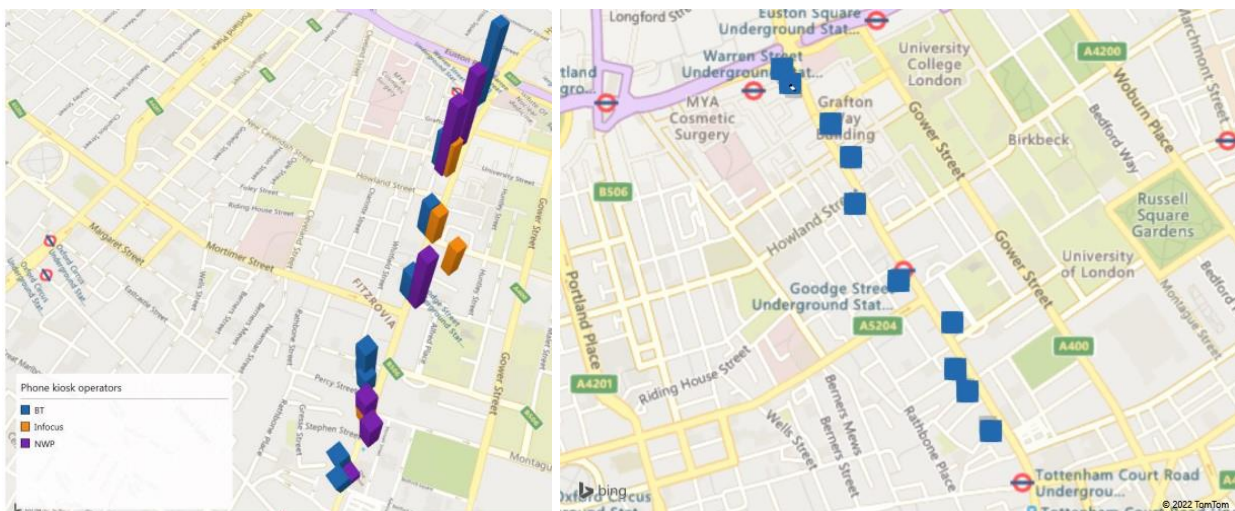
## 4 Assessment

4.1 On 25 May 2019, the GPDO was amended through the adoption of the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development, Advertisement and Compensation Amendments) (England) Regulations 2019. This amendment has had the effect of removing permitted development rights to install a public call box under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the GPDO. Accordingly a planning application and associated advertisement consent application have been submitted.

4.2 As planning permission is now required for the installation of a telephone kiosk, the Council can take into consideration more than just the siting, design and appearance of the kiosk. The Council is able to take into consideration all relevant planning policies and legislation.

4.3 The current applications form 1 set of 10 similar sets of planning and advertisement consent applications in which the proposed development seeks the overall introduction from 16 kiosks to 9 within Tottenham Court itself. There are proposed removals outside of TCR of some of the older stock of BT kiosks. If planning permission was to be approved a legal agreement (Section 278) would be required to secure the removal of the associated kiosks and to other management controls.

4.4 There are currently 33 kiosks within Tottenham Court, as shown on the plan below. Various operators have a number of kiosks within the street, of which all are in close proximity of each other (below left). BT have 16 kiosks which will be replaced with install 9 new 'BT Hub' kiosks on TCR and one on Euston Road (below right).



4.5 As part of a separate enforcement investigation following complaints about the underused and poorly maintained telephone kiosks along Tottenham Court Road, notices have been served on a number of kiosks in the street as a breach of condition A.2 (b) (Part 16 Class A) of the GPDO 2015.

## 5 Design

5.1 Policy D1 (Design) of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and to respect the character, setting, form and scale of neighbouring buildings, its contribution to the public realm, and its impact on wider views and vistas.



5.2 Policy D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will require development to preserve and where possible enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area.

5.3 The new kiosk falls within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area. Building numbers 120-133 are listed as a positive contributor to the conservation areas character, the new kiosk would be located adjacent to the building. Paragraph 12.6 of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy states that:

*Building frontages, roads and pavements are all important elements of the public realm and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have a detrimental impact on the character of the overall area. Such additions can include:*

- *Loss of original/interesting streetscape elements including surfacing materials*
- *Introduction of unsympathetic surfacing materials*
- *Clutter of street furniture, particularly traffic signage and new bollards*
- *Visual clutter from excessive signage (in particular along Tottenham Court Road including advertising hoardings, large fascia signs, banner signage and estate agents boards)*

5.4 These kiosks have been design around the inclusion of a “6 sheet” large digital screen which has resulted in a large monolithic panel which visually appears as an advertisement panel rather than a phone kiosk. This design approach has resulted in a structure which is dominant, visually intrusive and serves to detract from the appearance of the wider streetscene in a largely uncluttered part of the street. At a time of re-invention of the street, with widening of pavements and appreciation of generous public realm, these proposals are a disappointing reinstatement of underused pavement clutter.

5.5 I In a recent appeal decision along 23 and 39 Tottenham Court Road (REF: APP/X5210/W/18/3211169) and 3211168 – see Appendix 3) in relation to a phone kiosk of a marginal smaller scale but similar design approach, the Inspector noted

*In these circumstances I consider that the proposed call box would constitute a harmful addition to the existing clutter of this part of the street scene. Moreover, whilst I have acknowledged that the principle of development and the need for the facilities are not issues that can be taken into account, I consider that an additional call box in a position where there are already so many nearby would be perceived as somewhat incongruous by passers-by. This is not a comment arguing that there would be unnecessary or unwarranted competition, but an observation as to the visual impact of the structure in cumulative terms.*

5.6 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in making decisions on planning applications and appeals within a Conservation Area, special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area. In addition, Paragraph 193 of the Framework requires when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.

5.7 The Fitzroy Square conservation area statement outlines that ‘Since the last fieldwork for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area West Statement (2001) there has been an erosion in the quality of the historic built fabric in some places as a result of a number of factors, most significantly the commercial pressures which has led to the removal of historic shopfronts, inappropriate signage and shuttering and removal of elements of streetscape interest. .... Other factors that have influenced the character and appearance of the area include the cumulative impact of advertisements, signage and street furniture (including within the public realm).’ The statement advises that ‘Building frontages, roads and pavements are all important elements of the public realm

and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have an detrimental impact on the character of the overall area' Such additions are noted to include clutter of street furniture.

5.8 CPG Design advises *'the design of streets, public areas and the spaces between buildings, needs to be accessible, safe and uncluttered. Well-designed street furniture and public art in streets and public places can contribute to a safe and distinctive urban environment'*. Street furniture should not obstruct pedestrian views or movement.

5.9 One of the aims of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (Part 3: Vision and objectives) adopted in 2014 is to promote high quality physical environments through de-cluttering existing footways in this locality in order to enhance pedestrian movement and public realm. Similarly, it is also important to note that Tottenham Court Road has been the subject of a major public realm renewal programme as part of the Council's 'West End Project' involving an investment of £35m intended to transform this part of the borough. One of the objectives of the Project is to reduce the number of telephone kiosks and to declutter the public highway and streets, and as such, significant works have already taken place over the last few years to realise these improvements in this location.

5.10 However, there is no evidence in the application submission that any consideration has been given to the local aims and objectives of either the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan or the West End Project, nor has any attempt been made to integrate the Council's wider highway, urban realm and landscape proposals into the proposals. As an adopted Area Action Plan, the aims and objectives of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan are closely associated with the Camden Local Plan and have equal weight to Local Plan policies. As such, the proposal is at odds with the broader, integrated approach of the Council to improve and rationalise the public realm throughout the Borough, and is contrary to its objectives which, amongst other aims, seeks to enhance the visual appearance of the streetscene and declutter pedestrian footways, rather than add additional street clutter. In this regard, the proposal would fail to adhere to Policy D1 (Design) and CPG Design, Part 3 (Vision and objectives) of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, as well, as the core design principles as set out in Section 12 of the NPPF.

5.11 In this case, the proposed structure, by reason of its size and scale, adding unnecessary clutter, would be an obtrusive piece of street furniture detracting from the character and appearance of the streetscene. The incongruous design would therefore provide an intrusive addition to the street and in this regard would fail to adhere to Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage).

## **6 Planning Balance**

6.1 The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which aims to keep telecommunication sites to a minimum and encourage applicants to explore shared facilities rather than adding additional clutter. As shown on the photos below,



6.2

*The footway with the current existing Kiosks, (marked with red arrows)*

6.3 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF requires when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this case, there is considered to be less than substantial harm to the conservation area which requires an assessment of whether the public benefits outweigh the harm caused.

6.4 It is acknowledged that the proposal would include Wi-Fi to public services, USB ports for charging devices; provide capacity and mobile coverage with small cells, free phone calls; display community and emergency messaging, wayfinding, and Environmental sensors to measure air quality, noise and traffic. Whilst the proposal involves the removal of 2 kiosks, it involves the introduction of a kiosk designed around a digital panel in a new location in a street with a high number of kiosks within a conservation area. There is no evidence before the Council that these benefits can only be achieved on a kiosk of the proposed scale with the inclusion of a large digital panel or justification for the need for such a high number of kiosks within one street. Furthermore, as a result of Covid, many facilities such as wayfinding have been switched off and are unlikely to be used in the same way. We have no evidence of how well these types of facilities are appropriately used, especially most exist on personal mobile phones. We have no details on the locations of existing wayfinding in the area. There is scope of public messaging capabilities on existing bus shelters within the street. Furthermore a number of these benefits, such as phone charging, is something that can encourage ASB and can be given limited weight. Whilst weight is given to some of the benefits, for the reasons they do not outweigh the harm caused to the character and appearance of the streetscene and wider conservation area, public safety and the loss of footway and the impact on the public realm is not justified.

## **7 Highways/footpath width**

7.1 While it is recognised that there are existing kiosks located near the application site which would be removed, planning permission is now required for the replacement and we are full considering the impact of the addition. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 13 appeals were dismissed for installation of payphone kiosks along Euston Road and in King's Cross. One appeal decision notice was issued covering all of the appeals and this is attached for convenience (see Appendix 2). He concluded that all the proposed kiosks would add to street clutter and most of them would reduce footway widths hampering pedestrian movement.

- 7.2 The Inspector agreed in all 13 cases with the Council's concerns about the addition of street clutter whether the sites were or were not located inside a conservation area or affecting the setting of a listed building. In 11 cases he agreed that the impact on pedestrian movement was unacceptable and, when the issue was raised, that the impact on the visibility of traffic signals would also not be acceptable. He took on board the availability too of other telephone kiosks in the vicinity.
- 7.3 Policy D8 (Public Realm) of the London Plan 2021 states that development should '*Applications which seek to introduce unnecessary street furniture should normally be refused*'.
- 7.4 Policy T2 (Healthy Streets) of the New London Plan states that '*Development proposals should demonstrate how they will deliver improvements that support the ten Healthy Streets Indicators in line with Transport for London guidance*'. It is considered that the application would fail to deliver any improvements which support any of the ten Healthy Streets Indicators.
- 7.5 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities, and that the Council will resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network. Paragraph 6.10 states that the Council will expect works affecting the highway network to consider highway safety, with a focus on vulnerable road users, including the provision of adequate sightlines for vehicles, and that development should address the needs of vulnerable or disabled users. Furthermore, Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) point e) states that the Council will seek to ensure that developments provide high quality footpaths and pavements that are wide enough for the number of people expected to use them, including features to assist vulnerable road users where appropriate, and paragraph 9.10 of CPG Transport highlights that footways should be wide enough for two people using wheelchairs, or prams, to pass each other.
- 5.5 Camden's Streetscape Design manual – section 3.01 footway width states: “‘Clear footway’ is not the distance from kerb to boundary wall, but the unobstructed pathway width within the footway:
- 1.8 metres – minimum width needed for two adults passing;
  - 3 metres – minimum width for busy pedestrian street though greater widths are usually required;
  - Keeping the footway width visually free of street furniture is also important, allowing clear sightlines along the street’.
- 7.6 All development affecting footways in Camden is also expected to comply with Appendix B of Transport for London's (TfL's) Pedestrian Comfort Guidance, which notes that active and high flow locations must provide a minimum 2.2m and 3.3m of 'clear footway width' (respectively) for the safe and comfortable movement of pedestrians.
- 7.7 Policy T1 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will promote sustainable transport choices by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use and that development should ensure that sustainable transport will be the primary means of travel to and from the site. Policy T1 subsections a) and b) state that in order to promote walking in the borough and improve the pedestrian environment, the Council will seek to ensure that developments improve the pedestrian environment by supporting high quality improvement works, and make improvements to the pedestrian environment including the provision of high quality safe road crossings where needed, seating, signage and landscaping.
- 7.8 Policy T1 also states that where appropriate, development will be required to provide for interchanging between different modes of transport including facilities to make interchange easy and convenient for all users and maintain passenger comfort.
- 7.9 Paragraph 9.7 of CPG Transport seeks improvements to streets and spaces to ensure good quality access and circulation arrangements for all. Ensuring the following:



- Safety of vulnerable road users, including children, elderly people and people with mobility difficulties, sight impairments and other disabilities;
- Maximising pedestrian accessibility and minimising journey times;
- Providing stretches of continuous public footways without public highway crossings;
- Linking to, maintaining, extending and improving the network pedestrian pathways;
- Providing a high quality environment in terms of appearance, design and construction, paying attention to Conservation Areas;
- Use of paving surfaces which enhance ease of movement for vulnerable road users; and,
- Avoiding street clutter and minimising the risk of pedestrian routes being obstructed or narrowed e.g. by pavement parking or by street furniture.

7.10 Policy C5 (Safety and security) of the Camden Local Plan requires development to contribute to community safety and security, and paragraph 4.89 of policy C5 states that the design of streets needs to be accessible, safe and uncluttered, with careful consideration given to the design and location of any street furniture or equipment. Paragraphs 7.41 and 7.42 of CPG Design advise that the proposed placement of a new phone kiosk needs to be considered to ensure that it has a limited impact on the sightlines of the footway, and that the size of the kiosk should be minimised to limit its impact on the streetscene and to decrease opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

7.11 The footways in high flow areas should be at least 5.3 metres wide with a minimum effective footway width of 3.3 metres. The remaining footway would exceed the minimum required. However, the loss of pavement in such close proximity to an existing kiosks adding additional unnecessary clutter cannot be support.

7.12 Policy D8 (Public Realm) of the London Plan states that development should 'Applications which seek to introduce unnecessary street furniture should normally be refused'.

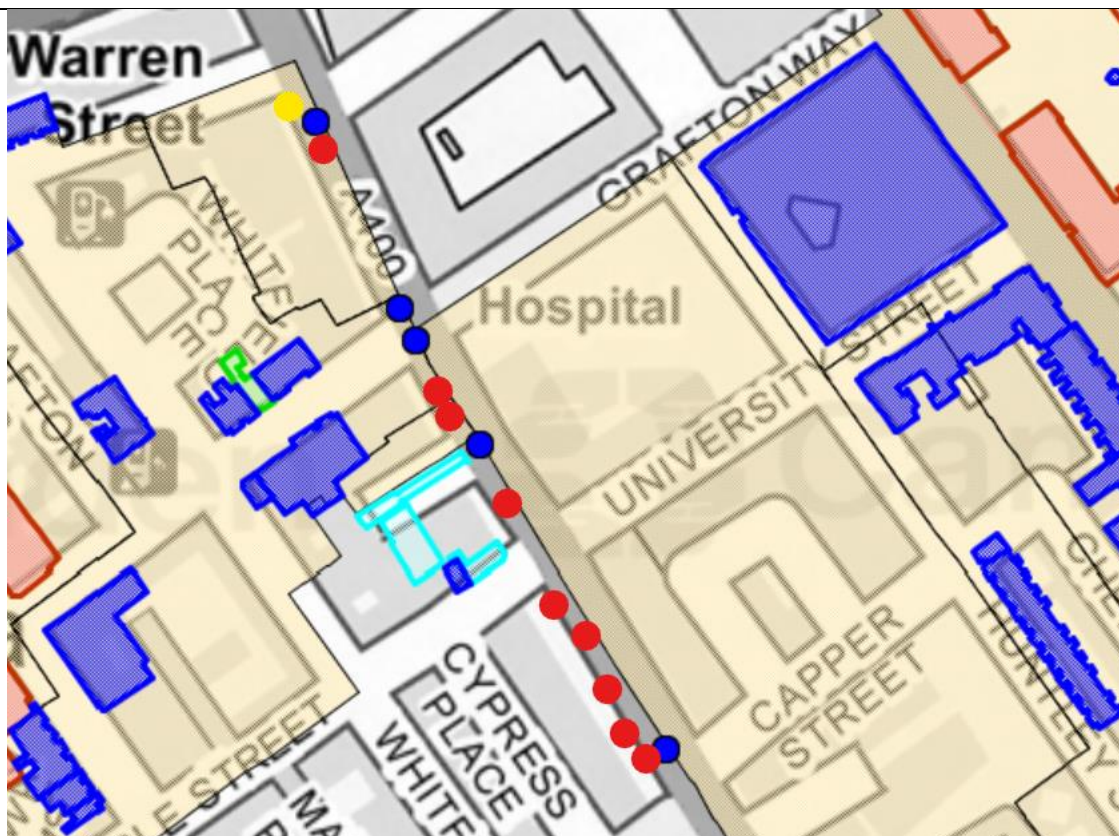
7.13 Transport colleagues were consulted for this application and state that as the proposal is to install a replacement telephone kiosk and the site is located on Tottenham Court Road (A400) which forms part of the strategic road network (SRN) and is located in a high footfall area in Central London between Goodge Street and Warren Street stations (both London Underground),. This is a busy road for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian volumes are extremely high in this location and are forecast to increase significantly when Crossrail services become operational (forecast for 2022).

7.14 The proposal to install a replacement telephone kiosk at the above site would introduce a significant physical and visual obstruction adjacent to a loading bay. The existing and proposed Kiosk would be located 0.5 m from the kerb of a strategic road and as a result would detrimentally impact the safety of pedestrian and road users. The proposal would fail to improve the pedestrian environment at the site. This is unacceptable in such a high footfall location in Central London. The proposal should be refused on this basis.

7.15 The aforementioned TfL guidance document is clear that siting street furniture in the pedestrian environment in close proximity to pedestrian crossings is not appropriate. The proposal is therefore contrary to TfL guidance as well as Camden Local Plan policies A1 and T1. The proposal should be refused on this basis.

7.16 The proposed telephone kiosk would obscure sightlines along and across the footway significantly. The proposed telephone kiosk would therefore constitute an unnecessary obstruction/impediment and a hazard to road users. The proposal should be refused on this basis.

7.17 The proposed telephone kiosk would clearly have a significant impact on pedestrian amenity, comfort and safety, as per the existing situation. For these reasons, the proposal is considered contrary to Local Plan policies A1 and T1 and should be refused on this basis.



The existing Kiosks along Tottenham Court road (marked by red dot) and proposed (marked in yellow)

- 7.18 In this location where there are several existing kiosks from a different provider in close proximity to the application site it is considered that allowing the loss of footway and the impact on the public realm is not justified. No justification has been submitted for the need to install a new, replacement kiosk. Refusal is therefore recommended on this basis.

## 8 Anti-social behaviour

- 8.1 With regards to community safety matters, a number of issues have been raised by the Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor. In particular it has been noted that existing telephone kiosks within the London Borough of Camden have become 'crime generators' and a focal point for anti-social behaviour (ASB). Specification, in relation to the locations of the kiosks around Camden there is a common theme among the crime statistics. All these areas have a major issue with street crime and in particular antisocial behaviour, pickpocketing and theft from person. These are areas of significant footfall with both commuters, local residents and numerous tourists. The design of these kiosks does not reduce the risk of these types of crime from occurring. Due to the openness of the kiosk any mobile phones on display at this location (either in hand or on charge) will be vulnerable to the opportunist phone snatch. With the new locations mostly closer to the carriageway this form of crime can be carried out by moped or bicycle. The large façade where the advertising screen is proposed will act as an opportunity for concealment and increase the risk of theft and assault.
- 8.2 The design and siting of a structure which is considered unnecessary and effectively creates a solid barrier to hide behind, on a busy footway would further add to street clutter and safety issues in terms of crime and ASB, through reducing sight lines and natural surveillance in the area, and providing a potential opportunity for an offender to loiter. This would increase opportunities for crime in an area which already experiences issues with crime, therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy C5 (Safety and security) and CPG Design.
- 8.3 The Council has experienced ASB from the BT link panels within Camden. Residents and members have reported a rise in anti-social behaviour and crime as a direct result of these kiosks being

installed. These activities include increased instances of loitering, as well as usage of the free calls facility to coordinate drug deals. This has been most apparently in areas such as Euston and Camden Town. Other boroughs such as Tower Hamlets and Islington have experienced similar issues and few boroughs are supporting the installation of more. One of the public benefits to these kiosks were the ability to provide free calls. Initially the free calls had to be removed until an algorithm was created to identify abnormal call levels to a single number and then blacklists this number. The intention being that this will result in the facility being available for legitimate use but will prevent abuse of the free calls for illegal activities.

8.4 A trial was undertaken in consultation with the Metropolitan Police and community safety team. As soon as the call facility was turned back on, the number of calls escalated very quickly, but very few numbers met the 'threshold' set by BT for call blocking. Data provided by BT and Link UK showed that the majority of calls were for less than 10 seconds. Officers concerns with these panels were that it was not possible to successfully demonstrate that the panels could operate without creating a 'honey pot effect' for crime and ASB.

8.5 Whilst a maintenance strategy is proposed for the application scheme, it is not considered sufficient to address the fact that ASB would be encouraged by the design of the kiosk. In an Appeal decision ref: APP/X5210/W/20/3253878 and 3253540 – see appendix 4) the Inspector noted *'the appellants' proposed maintenance regime would be likely to reduce the effects of such ASB. However, the form of the structure provides a degree of screening for such behaviour and would be likely to encourage it.*

8.6 This location is particularly prone to increased incidences of theft due to the cash machines located in close proximity to the application site.

8.7 This would increase opportunities for crime in an area which already experiences issues with crime, therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy C5 (Safety and security) and CPG Design.

## **9 Advertisement**

9.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 permits the Council to consider amenity and public safety matters in determining advertisement consent applications.

### Amenity: Visual impact and impact on residential amenity

9.2 Camden Planning Guidance for CPG Design advises that good quality advertisements respect the architectural features of the host building and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. CPG Adverts states that *'free-standing signs and signs on street furniture will only be accepted where they would not create or contribute to visual and physical clutter or hinder movement along the pavement or pedestrian footway'.*

9.3 Policy D4 (Advertisements) confirms that the *"Council will resist advertisements where they contribute to or constitute clutter or an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area."* (paragraph 7.82).

9.4 Camden Planning Guidance for CPG Amenity advises that artificial lighting can be damaging to the environment and result in visual nuisance by having a detrimental impact on the quality of life of neighbouring residents, that nuisance can occur due to 'light spillage' and glare which can also significantly change the character of the locality. As the advertisement is not located at a typical shop fascia level and would be internally illuminated, it would appear visually obtrusive.

9.5 The impact of visual clutter from advertisements in TCR is noted as an issue with the Fitzroy Square conservation area statement which is harmful to the wider area.

9.6 Whilst a commercial area, there are limited examples of digital advertisements and the advert on the existing kiosks are non-illuminated. The provision of a digital screen in this location would add visual clutter to the streetscene. It would harm the character of this part of the streetscene, serving

to harm the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. It is therefore considered that the proposed advertisement would have an adverse effect upon the visual amenity of the area.

- 9.7 If the application was to be recommended for approval, conditions to control the brightness, orientation and frequency of the displays, and prevent any moving displays would be required.

### Public Safety

- 9.8 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) requires development proposals to avoid disruption to the highway network, its function, causing harm to highway safety, hindering pedestrian movement and unnecessary clutter as well as addressing the needs of vulnerable users. The Council will not support proposals that involve the provision of additional street furniture that is not of benefit to highway users.

- 9.9 CPG Design in paragraph 7.42 advises that, *"All new phone boxes should have a limited impact on the sightlines of the footway."* This is supported by Transport for London (TfL) in the document titled 'Streetscape Guidance' which on page 142 states that, *"Sightlines at crossings should not be obstructed by street furniture, plantings or parked/stopped vehicles."* Paragraph 6.3.10 of the Manual for Streets advises that, *"Obstructions on the footway should be minimised. Street furniture is typically sited on footways and can be a hazard for blind or partially-sighted people."*

- 9.10 It is accepted that all advertisements are intended to attract attention. However, advertisements are more likely to distract road users at junctions, roundabouts and pedestrian crossings particularly during hours of darkness when glare and light spillage can make it less easy to see things, which could be to the detriment of highway and pedestrian and other road users' safety. In this case the advertisement is positioned adjacent to a loading bay which may distract drivers entering the space and opposite a junction on the other side of the street.

- 9.11 The proposed digital advertising sign is considered to be harmful to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic given that the proposed location of the screen. The screen is located next to a loading bay and a junction which would likely introduce undue distraction or hazard in public safety terms.

## **10 Conclusion**

- 10.1 The proposal would result in unacceptable street clutter, harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscape and add the loss of footway for unnecessary clutter, as well as, creating issues with safety. The advertisement would also serve to harm the visual amenity of the area. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in compliance with the aforementioned policies.

- 10.2 Whilst weight is given to some of the benefits, for the reasons they do not outweigh the less than substantial harm caused to the character and appearance of the conservation area, public safety and the loss of footway and the impact on the public realm is not justified.

- 10.3 If the applications were considered to be acceptable, the Council would seek an obligation attached to any planning permission for the applicant to enter into a legal agreement to secure the removal of all kiosks prior to the installation of any new kiosk. This agreement would also secure controls to ensure that the kiosk is well maintained and that the advertisement is only in place whilst the telephone element is in operation.

## **11 Recommendation**

### Refuse planning permission

- 11.1 The proposed telephone kiosk, by reason of its height, bulk, design and location, would add visual clutter and detract from the character and appearance of the wider streetscene, the Fitzrovia East Neighbourhood Area and the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area, contrary to policies D1



(Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 and Part 3 (Vision and objectives) of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan.

- 11.2 The proposed telephone kiosk, by virtue of its location, size and detailed design, adding to unnecessary street clutter, would reduce the amount of useable, unobstructed footway, which would be detrimental to the quality of the public realm, cause harm to highway and pedestrian safety and hinder pedestrian movement and have a detrimental impact on the promotion of walking as an alternative to motorised transport, contrary to policies G1 (Delivery and location of growth), A1 (Managing the impact of development), C6 (Access for all) and T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.
- 11.3 The proposed telephone kiosk, by reason of its scale, location and design would add unnecessary street clutter which would increase opportunities for crime in an area which already experiences issues with crime, therefore the proposal would be contrary to policy C5 (Safety and security) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.
- 11.4 In absence of a legal agreement to secure the removal of the existing kiosks and others in the vicinity and a maintenance plan for the proposed kiosk, the proposal would be detrimental to the quality of the public realm, and detract from the character and appearance of the streetscene, contrary to policies D1 (Design), G1 (Delivery and location of growth), A1 (Managing the impact of development), C6 (Access for all) and T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

#### Refuse advertisement consent

- 11.5 The proposed advertisement, by virtue of its location, scale, prominence and method of illumination, would due to its location adjacent to a loading bay and close to a junction introduce a distraction to traffic and pedestrians, causing harm to highway and public safety, contrary to Transport for London guidance, and to Policies A1 (Managing the Impact of Development), D4 (Advertisements) and T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) of the Camden Local Plan 2017
- 11.6 The proposed advertisement, by virtue of its location, scale, prominence, and method of illumination, would add visual clutter, detrimental to the amenity of the streetscene and the wider conservation area, contrary to policies D1 (Design), D2 (Heritage) and D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.