

REPORT TO: PLANNING COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting: 6th July, 2026
Report of: City Development Strategic Lead
Title: Appeals Report

Is this a Key Decision? No

Is this an Executive or Council Function? No

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report provides Members with information on latest decisions received and new appeals since the last report (20/05/2026).

2. Recommendation:

2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

3. Appeal Decisions

3.01 [25/1464/ADV](#) 399 Topsham Road, Priory. *Freestanding digital advertising screen.*

Planning Inspectorate Decision 6004658 Issued: 22nd June, 2026

Appeal Dismissed

In summary: The appeal was dismissed due to the harm to the visual amenity of the area.

Context and history

There are no relevant previous applications on the site.

Site and Proposal

The appeal site is within the boundaries of the Shell petrol station. The petrol station is already characterised by several illuminated and non-illuminated advertisements. On the opposite side of the road there is also a public house and hotel with advertisements. The streetscene includes a number of large trees, including one immediately adjacent the site at 397 Topsham Road.

The proposal relates to the installation of a freestanding digital advertisement display board. The screen would measure 6m wide by 3m tall. The base of the sign would be approximately 2.25m above ground level.

Main Material issues considered by the inspector

The effect of the proposed advertisement on the visual amenity of the area.

The Inspector noted trees are prominent in the views from the roundabout along Topsham Road towards the city centre. As such the trees' positive contribution extends not only to the predominantly residential part of Topsham Road but also that of the roundabout. This is because the greenery provides balance to the hard surfacing, buildings and advertisements of the appeal site. The existing advertisements and buildings do little to obscure views of the trees from viewpoints on Topsham Road or from the roundabout.

In contrast, the proposal would largely screen these trees from these views. Its scale and geometric form would also appear as an incongruous form set alongside other trees in its

vicinity that would remain unobstructed. As a result, it would significantly erode the positive contribution the trees make to the visual amenity of the roundabout's environs and that of Topsham Road.

There was no objection to the proposal in terms of public safety

Policy Compliance

It would conflict with Local Plan policy DG8 which advises that advertisements should not be consented if they are likely to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area in which they are proposed to be displayed. The proposal would also conflict with the provisions of the Framework which advises that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Key Policy Outcomes

Decisions for advert consent are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety.

Learning for Future Decisions

- Assess the wider visual context, not just the host site. Although the petrol filling station already had signage, the Inspector considered how the proposal affected views from the roundabout and along Topsham Road.
- Existing commercial signage does not automatically justify more signage. In this case, the replacement sign was much bigger than the small banner sign it would replace.
- Comparable examples elsewhere have limited value. Other digital advertisements were given little weight because their context and amenity effects were not shown to be directly comparable.

Laura Dymond, Senior Planning Officer

3.02 [25/1721/FUL](#) **The Cedars, Dryden Road, Priory.** *Installation of containerised plant room.*

Planning Inspectorate Decision 6005166 Issued: 22nd June, 2026

Appeal Allowed

Summary

- **Character impact** - The Inspector concluded that the proposal would result in no harm to the character of The Cedars and the site within which it sits.
- **Policy compliance** – No conflict found with Local Plan Policy DG1 or Core Strategy Objective 9. Also accords with paragraph 96 of the NPPF, but not material in the Inspector's decision as no harm found to arise from the proposal.
- **Conditions** – Four conditions were imposed (time limit, approved plans, construction hours, and plant noise specification).

Context and History

There are no relevant previous applications on the site.

Site and Proposal

- **Site** - The Cedars is a detached, brick building with hipped roofs, dating from around the late 1980s. It is an in-patient care facility and part of Wonford House Hospital. It is of some architectural merit and includes distinguishing features such as the fire escape staircases and hipped roofs.
- **Proposal** - Installation of a containerised plant room to be added to the front elevation of the building, with 3m high fence to surround the plant room.

Main Material Issue Considered by the Inspector

- **Character and appearance** -
 - Council argued proposal would be unsuitable as a long-term solution for the new plant room due to its location, massing & materials.
 - Inspector considered the architectural character of the building, the visual context of the hospital grounds, the siting, scale and colour of the plant room, the impact on the glazed link, and the proposed security fence.
 - Inspector noted that the wider hospital setting already contains a range of utilitarian and contrasting features.
 - Inspector concluded that the proposed plant room would be modest in scale, recessed in its siting, and largely screened by the existing building form. As a result, it would not appear incongruous or dominant.
 - Inspector also considered that the effect on outlook from the glazed connection would be very limited.

Policy Compliance

- Complies with Local Plan Policy DG1 (objectives of urban design).
- Complies with Core Strategy Objective 9 (local distinctiveness, excellence in design).
- Complies with paragraph 96 of the NPPF (healthy, inclusive and safe places), but not material in the Inspector's decision as no harm was found to arise from the proposal.

Learning for Future Decisions

- All existing additions / alterations to the building, and surrounding utilitarian features should be taken into consideration for services proposals.
- External connections may be functionally necessary but may not constitute development.

Eleanor Washington, Planning Officer.

4. New Appeals

- 4.1 [25/1429/PDCD](#) **Unit 13, St Thomas Centre, EX4 1DF.** *Change of use for the conversion of the first floors (Class E) to create three self-contained residential units (Class C)*

Planning Inspectorate Appeal 6009862 Start Date: 22nd May, 2026.

- 4.2 [25/0957/OUT](#) **Land at Barley Lane, St Thomas.** *Outline planning permission (with all matters reserved apart from access) for the phased development of up to 65 residential dwellings, two access points from Nadder Park Road, public open space and associated infrastructure (including land for biodiversity enhancements).*

Planning Inspectorate Appeal 6009462 Start Date: 22nd May, 2026.

- 4.3 [25/1158/FUL](#) **13C St James's Road, Duryard & St James's.** *Change of use of office building (Class E) to a self-contained dwelling (Class C3) with parking*

Planning Inspectorate Appeal 6010324 Start Date: 4th June, 2026.

- 4.4 [23/1532/OUT](#) **Sandy Park Farm, Old Rydon Lane, Topsham.** *Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved bar access) for up to 158 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and up to 17,567 sq m of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E, F2, B2 and B8) with associated infrastructure.*

Planning Inspectorate Appeal 6009268 Start Date: 4th June, 2026.

- 4.5 [26/0273/FUL](#) **Land on the East Side of Rose Cottage, Wrefords Lane, Duryard & St James's.** *Retrospective planning permission for the temporary provision of two wild bird enclosures for wild bird rescue and release, on land to the south of Wrefords Lane, Exeter..*

Planning Inspectorate Appeal 6010715 Start Date: 17th June, 2026.

Ian Collinson
Strategic Director for Place, City Development

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling the report:

Letters, application files and appeal documents referred to in report are available for inspection from: City Development, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

Contact for enquiries: Democratic Services (Committees) - Tel: 01392 265275