



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2017

**by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/17/3172072**

**Pavement in front of 99-103 South Street, Romford RM1 1NX**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under a Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
  - The appeal is made by Mr Derek Parkin of Infocus Public Networks Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
  - The application Ref M0002.17, dated 9 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2017.
  - The development proposed is a public call box.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effects of the proposed call box firstly, on the character and appearance of the area and secondly, on the movement of pedestrians on the pavement.

### Reasons

3. The proposal seeks to install a public call box on the pavement outside the Moon and Stars public house (Nos 99-103), for which prior approval of the local planning authority is required in relation to its siting and appearance, in order to comply with the requirements of Schedule 2, Part 16 (Communications) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (GPDO).
4. The Moon and Stars public house is part of a group of buildings on the eastern side of South Street operating as restaurants. The associated outside seating areas and awnings restrict the overall width of the pavement. The street furniture in this stretch of South Road appears to have been carefully arranged with regularly spaced trees, cycle stands and seats as well as litter bins, lamp columns and an occasional phone box and advertisement. The gaps between these various elements are an important feature of the street, ensuring that the pavement does not appear enclosed or overly cluttered.
5. In this context, the addition of a call box outside the Moon and Stars would increase the sense of enclosure along the eastern pavement of South Street. It would also disrupt the rhythm and spacing of the existing street furniture, introducing additional clutter into an area that has been laid out with the intention of reducing it. These changes would be detrimental to the street scene.

6. I conclude that the proposed call box would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy DC61 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (Core Strategy). This policy, amongst other things, requires development to create or enhance the public realm and ensure that it is free of clutter and easily accessible.

#### *Pedestrian movements*

7. Outside the Moon and Stars public house South Street is semi-pedestrianised with no access to general traffic. There is a clear distinction between the tarmacked area used by buses and the light-coloured slabs and brick pavements of the footways. Whilst crossing the street is relatively easy due to the small number of vehicle movements, pedestrian movements are predominantly along footways on either side of the street.
8. The street furniture and eating areas outside the pubs and restaurants already limit the amount of space for pedestrians on these footways, where there is a high footfall throughout the day and during the evenings. Placing a call box that further restricts the width of the footway outside the Moon and Stars would present pedestrians with an additional obstacle to negotiate when walking along South Street. Furthermore, the gaps between the various features are important to give pedestrians a choice of places where they can cross the road in an unimpeded manner.
9. I conclude that the proposed siting for the call box would cause inconvenience for pedestrians using the pavement on the eastern side of South Street. It would therefore be contrary to Policies DC34 and DC61 of the Core Strategy which seeks to promote walking by improving the pedestrian environment and requiring development to be designed and orientated around the needs of pedestrians.

#### **Conclusions**

10. I accept that the minimalistic and inclusive design would make the call box accessible for people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and those who have difficulties negotiating sprung doors. However, these positive aspects of the scheme do not outweigh the harms I have identified to the character and appearance of the area and the convenience of pedestrians using the town centre.
11. For these reasons, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Sheila Holden*

INSPECTOR