



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: 18th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/W/17/3172070

Pavement in front of 24-26 High Street, Romford RM1 1HR

- 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 M0003.17, dated 9 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 27 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is a public call box.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the call box on the safety and convenience of pedestrians on the pavement, with reference to its proposed siting.

Reasons

3. The proposal seeks to install a public call box on the pavement outside Nos 24-26, 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).

Pedestrian movements

4. The shopfronts in this part of the High Street are set back behind an overhanging first floor which is supported by a series of pillars. The remainder of the pavement in the immediate vicinity of the proposed call box is a good width. However, it is already partially obstructed by the presence of mature street trees, bollards, and a lamp column. A little further east there is also a seat. The width of the pavement is also decreasing significantly on the approach to the junction with South Street and Market Place.
5. There are significant numbers of pedestrians using this section of the High Street, although it is not as busy as other parts of the town centre. The introduction of a call box in the proposed location would present pedestrians walking along the street with an additional obstacle to navigate around. It would create an unnecessary pinch point between the tree, lamp column and pillars supporting the canopy above the shops, even though a footpath of no less than 2m would be retained around the call box.

6. I conclude that it would be detrimental to the safety and convenience of pedestrians using the pavement along the north side of the High Street. It would therefore be contrary to Policy DC34 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies which seeks to promote walking by improving the pedestrian environment and requiring development to take account of the needs of pedestrians.

Other Matters

7. The site for the proposed call box also lies within the Romford Conservation Area. I therefore have a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that Area.
8. The buildings on the north side of the High Street appear to date from the mid-20th century and are not of any architectural merit. There is a variety of street furniture in the vicinity, but the area does not have a cluttered appearance. The proposed siting would not adversely affect the appearance of the historic crossroads at the centre of the Conservation Area. I therefore concur with Council's assessment that a call box would not appear incongruous. Consequently, the Area would be preserved.
9. 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 harm I have identified to the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians along this part of the High Street.

Conclusion

10. Therefore, for the reason set out above, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR