



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/17/3172073

Pavement in front of 119-121 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 M0008.17, 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 Nos 119-121, 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).

Character and appearance

4. The proposal would be located in part of South Street that 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 paviours on the footways used by pedestrians. 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. They also provide pedestrians with a number of different places where they can cross the street without having to negotiate obstacles.

5. In this context, the addition of a call box outside Nos 119-121 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. The pavement outside Nos 119-121 is a generous width which is partly light-coloured slabs and partly red brick paving. Unlike the footway further north on South Street, there are no outside seating areas that restrict the width of the pavement. Pedestrians therefore have plenty of space in which to walk along the eastern side of the street.
8. Placing a call box in the proposed location would reduce the gap that currently exists between two street trees. This would marginally restrict the opportunities for pedestrians to cross South Street. However, I am not persuaded that this would unduly obstruct any desire line for pedestrians in this part of the town centre.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed siting of the call box would not cause unacceptable inconvenience for pedestrians and would comply with Policies DC34 and DC61 of the Core Strategy. These policies seek 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. I have also found that the siting of the proposal would not adversely affect pedestrian movements. However, these positive aspects of the scheme do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the town centre.
11. For this reason, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR