
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2020

by J P Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/20/3246986

98-103 North Road, St. Andrews, Bristol BS6 5AJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Miss Katie Pickett against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00835/F, dated 14 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is a shipping container.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The site address is taken from the appeal form which tallies with the decision notice. I noted on my site visit that the shipping container had been removed from the site and I have therefore considered the appeal on that basis and amended the above description of development accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the shipping container on the character and appearance of North Road and;
 - whether the proposal would lead to noise and disturbance which would harm the occupants of the surrounding residential area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. North Road is a very enclosed street with the houses closely fronting the road. They are extensively and elaborately detailed with various architectural details including gables, single and double height bays, mullions, stone banding and ornate eaves. The road has on street parking to both sides.
5. The site is a gap in an otherwise continuous residential frontage of North Road, just behind houses on the main Gloucester Road. The site is a concrete hardstanding which is used for bin storage and car parking, consequently its frontage is largely open except for a short low height brick wall.

6. The shipping container would be sited to one side of the site. It would be very prominent from North Road as the roadside pavement is very close. Moreover, as the site is a gap in an otherwise built up and enclosed frontage, the eye would be drawn to it.
7. The container due to its shape and material would appear as an industrial element which would have no inherent reason to be within a residential area and would look inappropriate. Furthermore, its utilitarian box like angular form would sharply contrast and detract from the rich detailing of the North Road houses.
8. Whilst the container could be painted to soften its shape, this would draw attention to it. Even with painting it would still look like an industrial container in a residential context.
9. I have been made aware of the use of a container at the rear of the Co-op store further along North Road, however I noted that this is considerably smaller and is seen in conjunction with the store with a clear intention for recycling. Whilst there are some commercial properties in North Road, the immediate environs of the appeal site are residential. The scaffolding opposite the site may well have been in place for 2 years but that is not a matter before me and is different to the appeal proposal. I have also considered the container 250 yards away, but that site has a different context. I acknowledge the appellant's commitment to keep the site tidy but that would not overcome the visual impact of the container itself.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (CS) and Policies DM26 and DM27 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan, seek to promote high quality urban design, contribute to the area's character, safeguard local distinctiveness, respect pattern of development, enhance views, reflect predominant materials and street form. The proposal would be in conflict with these policies.

Noise/disturbance

11. The container would be used for storage, in connection with an adjacent business, which would involve movements of the users. However, such movements would be not necessarily be noisy as the existing business is immediately adjacent and it too is within a residential area. There are also ongoing movements of visitors and residents getting in/out of cars parked on the street outside houses at all times of day or night. The container would be low in height and width which would constrain the use of any machinery for storage. The container would have doors at the appellant's side, and I have not been advised that they were unduly noisy to open when the container was present.
12. The container could be limited to storage use only by condition and similarly, it could be restricted to the appellant's use only. Additionally, a condition could prevent the container being moved/replaced to avoid disturbance by machinery. I also have not been presented with any clear evidence that the container would lead to disturbance by anti-social behaviour. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not lead to significant noise and disturbance. Policies BCS21 and BCS23 of the CS seek to safeguard the conditions of

occupiers and avoid noise and other pollution. The proposal would not be in conflict with these particular policies.

Other matters

13. The site is just outside the Gloucester Road Conservation Area; the neighbouring dwelling, 95 North Road, is included but otherwise the appeal site and the other neighbouring dwellings are excluded. A couple of the houses on Gloucester Road to the rear of the site are also included. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal explains the focus is around the retail frontage of Gloucester Road, taking in the older surrounding residential frontages. The document mentions the nearby Arches as a landmark but makes no reference to the site or the North Road frontages. Consequently, based on the evidence before me, the appeal site does not have a connection with the Conservation Area. Visually the container would be seen against the side wall of 95 North Road, which is not notable. Similarly, it would be seen in conjunction with the rear of the Gloucester Road houses behind the site, but these are undistinguished and partially obscured by a fence and shrubs. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

14. Due to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of North Road, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR