



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2021

by C Rafferty LLB (Hons), Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/21/3281376
261 Barlow Moor Road, Manchester M21 7GJ

- 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 InPost against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 130456/FO/2021, dated 18 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is the installation of InPost parcel locker.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A parcel locker has been installed at the site, which the Council has stated is unauthorised. I note that the proposal seeks to replace the existing locker with one of different dimensions. As such, I have taken the description of development from the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises land to the front of No. 261 Barlow Moor Road. The surrounds are characterised by a mix of uses, with the immediate area comprising a parade of two storey properties with commercial frontages at street level. Courtyards are present to the front, adjacent to the footpath, and appear to be used for car parking. In the immediate terraced row to which the appeal property belongs these courtyards are largely free from fixed development save for boundary walls and fencing.
5. A parcel locker is currently present on site, along the boundary with No. 263. The proposal seeks to replace this with a locker of smaller dimensions. It would be specified in magnelis/ stainless steel with a neutral colour scheme and simple branding. Nonetheless, despite its smaller scale and muted design, it would remain a prominent addition to the streetscene.
6. While the surrounds are primarily commercial, the courtyards to the front of the immediate properties are predominantly free from fixed development. In this context, the proposal would read as an obtrusive feature, towering above the low boundary wall. It would cover part of the front of No. 261, creating a

visual break in the established row of frontages and partially obscuring views of the properties beyond the site. In this sense it would read as an out of place and jarring feature, detracting from the shop fronts and failing to respect the nature of the surroundings.

7. The current locker at the site serves to highlight the above visual harm that such a structure can cause in this location. Even acknowledging the differences between it and the proposal, the proposal would still appear as an incongruous feature due to its siting in front of No. 261, which would fail to respect the prevailing pattern of surrounding development.
8. For the reasons given above I find that the development would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would fail to accord with Policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to ensure good design.

Other Matters

9. Given the commercial character of the surrounds and the wide highway, trips generated by the proposal would not have unacceptable highway safety impacts. While positioned along the boundary, an open courtyard would remain at No. 263 and the proposal would not be immediately adjacent to or facing the large front windows of this property. As such, it would not have unacceptable impacts on the light, outlook and privacy experienced at No. 263. Finally, I have no substantive evidence before me that the proposal would cause an increase in crime rates. These represent a lack of harm, which is a neutral consideration.
10. The appellant refers to benefits of the proposal and has provided a copy of an appeal decision in this regard.¹ The proposal would allow for linked trips and a single collection point, providing sustainability benefits and allowing for efficient use of the site. In addition, it is fitted with CCTV cameras having regard to community safety and crime prevention and could provide increased privacy at the neighbouring property. These benefits are acknowledged and carry weight in favour of the proposal.
11. However, I have identified that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with local and national policy in this regard. The above benefits when taken together do not outweigh this identified harm.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, the proposal would not accord with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rafferty

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/K3605/W/21/3271102