



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 August 2022

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/22/3295467

The Moss Nook at the corner of Trenchard Drive and Ringway Road, Manchester M22 5NA

- 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 Newpark Group against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 128916/FO/2020, dated 15 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is a hotel and associated infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the course of the Council's consideration of the planning application amended plans were provided by the appellant showing a reduced scale of development. The proposal was subsequently described as the 'Erection of a part two/part three storey building to form Hotel (C1 use) together with associated car parking and landscaping'. As the plans on which the Council made its decision, I have considered the proposal on the same basis. However, plan 2026/PL0003 Rev 11 was submitted after the Council's decision. This was provided to address an inconsistency between the earlier plan revisions. As the nature of concerns of those who would normally have been consulted are clear from consultation on the original set of plans, I do not consider that their interests would be prejudiced if I take this corrected plan into account.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the living conditions of nearby residents
 - the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The site lies on a corner plot at the junction of Trenchard Drive with Ringway Road. Trenchard Drive is primarily a quiet closed-off residential street providing access to several small residential cul-de-sacs. The proposal would introduce a round-the-clock use, principally aimed at serving users of Manchester Airport. It is in a location which is close to airport infrastructure, including parking and a main access route. It would therefore reasonably expect to predominantly accommodate a high number of travellers using the airport.

5. In providing 30 rooms the accommodation would generate a relatively high amount of activity when compared to the nearby residential properties. The area of most intensive activity would be about the entrance which would face Ringway Road. Here the building would provide a noise barrier between the main entrance and residential properties on Trenchard Drive. Even accounting for taxis pulling up outside of the entrance, the distance to the nearest residential properties and intervening building would limit direct effects on neighbours.
6. However, the car park has common boundaries with a residential property on Maroon Road and others on Trenchard Drive. A significant proportion of users are likely to arrive and leave by private motor vehicle. Given the degree of local parking restrictions on both of the adjoining roads, the majority of visitors relying on private vehicles would utilise the proposed parking area.
7. I acknowledge that car parking could be managed such that those arriving at unsociable times could be directed to reserved spaces close to the Ringway Road frontage. This could minimise the likelihood of noise disturbing nearby residents. However, given the likely requirement for some travellers to leave in the small hours to catch early flights, there would inevitably be activity within other parts of the car park area, including those close to the bordering houses.
8. Unlike the previous commercial use of the site, the around-the-clock arrival and departure of visitors would generate activity and noise within the car park at unsociable times. Although this might be more dispersed than activity associated with the former restaurant use, travellers loading cars, closing vehicle doors and manoeuvring vehicles within its confined area would give rise to significant potential for disturbing nearby residents at times when they would reasonably expect to enjoy uninterrupted sleep.
9. I have little doubt that local residents will experience a degree of noise arising from activity associated with the airport. Indeed, it is possible that properties may benefit from improved sound insulation. However, the close proximity, intermittency and unpredictability of potential noise within the car park would be distinct from the more distant sources associated with the airport, air traffic or traffic on the local roads. In my view, they would not be of a nature that sleepers would become accustomed to. They would therefore be substantially more likely to cause disturbance. Although occupiers of the hotel could be protected from such noises, there is little before me to demonstrate that the same could be achieved for surrounding residential occupiers.
10. I acknowledge that appellant's proposal to encourage sustainable forms of transport through the use of a Travel Plan which could limit the scale of activity in the car park. However, it does not include any limitation to the use of the car park area; to do so could conflict with commercial aims and potentially cause out-spill parking which could lead to adverse effects elsewhere.
11. Although it could impose requirements on staff, in the absence of detailed targets and an undertaking to achieve them, I do not find it a realistic mechanism to discourage visitors who are likely to travel with large or multiple luggage items often associated with air travel. It is therefore a matter of limited weight in the context of consideration of the effects on neighbouring residents.

12. The outdoor nature of the potential noise sources and the height of the first-floor accommodation of the surrounding houses, being those most likely to contain bedrooms, would limit opportunities for noise mitigation. I note the proposal to erect a 2.3m high timber board fencing to the northern boundary of the car park. However, at a limited height, this is unlikely to be effective at the upper floors of the nearest residential properties. In the absence of alternative detailed measures to prevent the disturbance as described, I do not consider a condition requiring them to be reasonable. This could result in other adverse effects and/or nullify the benefit of any permission it was attached to.
13. For the above reasons, I find that the proposed use of the site in close proximity to Manchester Airport would give rise for considerable potential to cause a significant adverse effect on the living conditions of neighbouring residents through noise and disturbance at unsociable times. It would conflict with Policy DM1 of Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document [2012] (the CS) and saved Policy DC26 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan as they seek to control and reduce the impact of the effects of noise on local people.

Character and appearance

14. The site lies at an interface of mixed land uses. Trenchard Drive and the northern side of Ringway Road extending westwards feature residential semis and terraces. The Tatton Arms, a traditional 2-storey public house, lies on the opposite corner of Trenchard Drive and is flanked by parking areas. To the south are open fields bordered by hedges where development is limited. To the east lies the B5166 Styal Road, a dual carriageway bordered by larger scale commercial development benefitting from the spacious setting of the broad road corridor and intervening landscaped areas.
15. The proposal has been designed to orientate the main entrance on to Ringway Road. Viewed on this frontage, the scale of the building would benefit from space either side arising from the adjacent parking and open junction areas. It would utilise flat roof forms and a mix of zinc cladding, renders, panelling and brickwork to the elevations. A mix of clear and opaque glazing openings would be uPVC framed. Upper floor openings would be incorporated into prominent projecting box frame detailing. It would be unashamedly modern in appearance.
16. Due to the openness of the junction, the building would also feature as a prominent corner element close to the back of the pavement on the principally domestic frontage of Trenchard Drive. Here development consists of a fine grain of closely-sited 2-storey dwellings with dual-pitched roofs of moderate height. The houses are characterised by their traditional domestic scaled features, form and proportioning.
17. The block design of the building, utilising flat roofs with overlapping cladding to the higher section, would generate a significant sense of massing at the corner. Despite that the overall height might be lower than the set back apex of the adjacent building at Moss Nook House, the greater height of the elevations and high eaves line would present as a significant and imposing scale of building compared to those along the street. Even accounting for the principle of a larger 'bookend' scale of development on the corner plot, the significant massing of the building would starkly contrast with the more intimate scale of development on the Trenchard Drive frontage.

18. Furthermore, there would be little alignment with the strong horizontal lines created by the openings and eaves of the existing buildings. The feature large scale framing of grouped openings on the upper floors and incorporation of modern materials would serve to highlight a stark contrast between the proposal and existing character of development on this frontage. Notwithstanding that the proposed building has been reduced in scale since an earlier iteration, it would dominate the existing scale of buildings and significantly jar with the existing scale and appearance of development on the street.
19. For those reasons, I find that the proposed building would relate poorly to the scale and appearance of neighbouring residential development on Trenchard Drive. It would conflict with Policy DM1 of the CS as, amongst other things, it seeks to secure a design, scale and appearance of development which has regard to the character of the local area. For similar reasons, it would conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

20. There is no dispute between the main parties that the proposal would make effective use of a site which has remained unused for some time. It would increase and broaden the accommodation offer to visitors and travellers in the area to enhance the leisure and tourism offers. Moreover, it would support the local economy through job creation during its construction and operation and have knock-on benefits to other businesses in the locality. These are social and economic benefits of considerable weight.
21. I acknowledge other concerns raised by local residents and businesses nearby. However, pursuant to my finding on the main issues, my decision does not turn on those matters.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

22. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and adversely affect the living conditions of those living close by. The scheme would provide some economic and social benefits, however, in the particular circumstances of the case, I do not consider those benefits to outweigh the totality of the identified harm. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not be allowed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR