



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2024

by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/W/24/3345254

Hope Court, Canada Way, Bristol BS1 6XU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by James Savage against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03686/F.
 - The development proposed is minor modifications to existing bicycle store and installation of four bike hangars.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for minor modifications to existing bicycle store and installation of four bike hangars at Hope Court, Bristol BS1 6XU, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/03686/F, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: Drawing No. BWMC01 Location Plan, Drawing No. BWMC02 Proposed New Bicycle Hangars and Drawing No. BWMC03 Reconfiguration of Existing Store.
 - 3) The cycle parking provision, hereby permitted, shall be completed in accordance with details on Drawing No. BWMC02 Proposed New Bicycle Hangars, Drawing No. BWMC03 Reconfiguration of Existing Store, and with the submitted details of 'Proposed Bike Hangars', and thereafter, will be kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles only.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character or appearance of the City Docks Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal sites are located in a relatively contemporary residential development in the City Docks Conservation Area (CA). Commercial dock activities ceased many decades ago, and much of the area has been regenerated in a classic interpretation of waterfront development. However, while now predominantly lined by residential development the CA retains a distinct dockside ambience.
4. The residential development was constructed in the 1980's and has an architectural style typical of that era, comprising groups of low rise apartment

blocks. As a relatively modern addition the development is a neutral feature in this historic setting. The small estate has a grid pattern with a central footpath that is punctuated by small open spaces and some vegetation. As well as providing access to the apartments, this footpath provides pedestrian access to the edge of the Baltic Wharf where the historic significance of this part of the CA can be appreciated.

5. Sections 72(1) and of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires when determining proposals in conservation areas that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
7. While the appeal sites are alongside the central footpath, they are in the middle of the estate such that the sites are largely screened from the historic interest at the Wharf's edge. The proposal has two elements. The first element would locate four new cycle stores in existing spaces.
8. The spaces in question are small, laid with blocks and relatively devoid of structures or vegetation. With few distinguishing features, these spaces offer limited visual interest in the estate. The proposed stores would be set at the edge of the spaces and stepped back from the footpath. Moreover, the new structures would be modest in scale and some space would be retained near the footpath. As such the stores would not appear a harmfully dominating feature in this locale.
9. The new stores would be simple, metal, black contemporary forms. Both in appearance and scale, they would be visually in keeping with existing black metal street furniture already evident in this area. This simple design would also be sympathetic to the overall architectural aesthetic of this estate. As modest structures of a sensitive design, the new additions at this location, would be readily assimilated into the existing street scene without visual harm.
10. The second element of this proposal relates to a structure which is already in situ. This is a simple, modestly proportioned brick building which appears to be an original feature of the estate. The proposal would move the door from the side to the centre of the existing building's elevation. While this would require vegetation being removed, this is a narrow door and only a very small amount of vegetation would be lost. Therefore, this change would be very minor and would have a negligible visual effect on this area.
11. For the reasons stated above, the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the immediate setting and would not harm the existing features that contribute to the special interest in the wider area. Consequently, the proposed development at the appeal sites would preserve the character of this part of the CA.
12. I therefore find that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character or appearance of the City Docks Conservation Area. In this regard, this proposal would accord with Policy BSC22 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy and Policy DM31 of the Bristol Local Plan – Site

Allocations and Development Management Policies (Local Plan). These Policies collectively require that proposals will safeguard heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance.

13. The proposal would also accord with provisions of the Framework which seek well-designed places and to conserve the historic environment.

Other Matters

14. It is asserted that the proposed reconfiguration of the existing building would not result in a convenient arrangement for cycle storage. However, the evidence suggests that this is already functioning as a cycle store. Moreover, it is a reasonable size building of a regular shape, and it seems to me that in its current form, it can safely accommodate a number of cycles.
15. Repositioning the door would allow cycles to be parked either side of the buildings' length and this would free up slightly more space than currently. As such, I find no conflict with Policy DM23 of the Local Plan and advice of the Cycle Parking Guidance which collectively, amongst other matters, seek adequate storage facilities for cycles.

Conditions

16. Accordance with approved plans is necessary for certainty and to protect the character of the area. Ensuring that the cycle stores are available for this use is also necessary for certainty and to support sustainable patterns of transport, for which there is support in local policy.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons stated above and having regard to the development plan, and material considerations, including the Framework, the appeal is allowed.

A J Sutton

INSPECTOR