



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2025

by Beverley Wilders BA (Hons) PgDURP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q5300/W/25/3359464

Land to the rear of Former Police Station, 687 Green Lanes, London N21 3RS

- 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 Paragon Glass Services Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Enfield.
 - The application Ref is 24/01293/FUL.
 - The development is Change of Use of the Site for the Purpose of External Storage (Class B8) with Ancillary Office Accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development used in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, I have amended it slightly by removing reference to it being part retrospective as this is not a description of development.
3. The planning application form states that development started on site in July 2021 but that it is not complete. At the time of my visit, external storage was taking place on the appeal site, including on areas not shown on the proposed site layout plan. For the avoidance of doubt, I have assessed the development as shown on the submitted plans and not as seen at my site visit.
4. I am aware that there is an emerging Local Plan (ELP) for the area and, from my dealings with other appeals in the area, that that this was submitted for examination on 6 August 2024. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and to the evidence before me regarding the current stage of the local plan examination, I attach no more than limited weight to relevant policies in the ELP.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the setting and significance of the Grade II Listed former police station;
 - the effect of the development on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential property having particular regard to noise, disturbance and outlook;

- whether the development makes suitable provision for car and cycle parking, servicing and refuse storage and its effect on highway and pedestrian safety: and
- whether the principle of the use for external storage is acceptable.

Reasons

Listed Building

6. The former police station at 687 Green Lanes is a Grade II Listed Building. It was constructed in around 1915 and is an imposing, three-storey red-brick building fronting the road. To the rear of the building is an attached single-storey former cell block with a detached, single-storey former office building, seemingly of later construction beyond that. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal, the significance of the Listed Building derives from its architectural composition and its historic use as a police station.
7. There is some uncertainty as to whether the detached former office building is a curtilage listed structure. Notwithstanding this, an application for listed building consent was submitted concurrently with the planning application and was also refused by the Council. However, that decision is not before me or the subject of this appeal.
8. It seems likely that the land surrounding the former police station, largely open but enclosed by brick walls and currently laid to tarmac, was historically used in connection with the police station. Given this and its physical proximity to the Listed Building, it forms part of its setting. As stated above, at the time of my site visit, the land surrounding the Listed Building was being used for the external storage of various materials meaning that the setting is currently detracting from the significance of the building.
9. The appeal site comprises land to the north and west of the Listed Building. The development includes the use of the detached former office building as an office in connection with the use of the site for external storage by a local business supplying and installing double glazed windows and doors. The area of external storage is positioned adjacent to the detached, former office building at the rear of the site. The appellant states that the appeal site is and would be used as an overspill facility for storage and that it would comprise the storage of frames and profiles but not glass. It is stated that there will be no visitor/customer access to the site, that the office would be used by a maximum of 2 people and that the storage area would be accessed once a day by a 7.5 tonne panel van.
10. The Listed Building is sited adjacent to a busy road in a mixed use area comprising residential and commercial uses. Notwithstanding this, the use of the site for the external storage of materials as proposed would adversely affect the setting of the Listed Building both visually and also through a likely increase in noise generation from the movement of these materials. Although the siting of the storage is at the rear of the site, adjacent to the boundary wall and detached former office building, it is nevertheless in close proximity to the Listed Building and would be harmful to it. External commercial storage is incompatible with the historic use of the building and with the current residential use of the front part of the Listed Building.

11. The current use of the land surrounding the Listed Building which is harmful to it appears to be unauthorised. Therefore, whilst the appellant states that the granting of permission for the development would mean that all other unauthorised storage at the site would be removed, this is not a reason to grant planning permission for something that is harmful in its own right.
12. The use of the detached former office building as ancillary offices is compatible with its previous use and no changes are proposed to the fabric of the building. The Council has raised no objections to the effect of this aspect of the development on the Listed Building and I see no reason to disagree.
13. The area of external storage proposed would be harmful to the setting and significance of the Listed Building. The harm to the significance of the Listed Building that would result from the storage use would be less than substantial. Noting the scale, location and reversible nature of the external storage use, the harm would be towards the lower end of less than substantial harm. Nevertheless, I have attached considerable importance and weight to the desirability of avoiding any such harmful effect on the Listed Building in accordance with Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Paragraph 215 of the Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. No specific public benefits have been referred to by the appellant, though reference is made to bringing the site back into a meaningful use and to the economic benefits of the development. It is stated that 2 people would be employed at the site, though it is unclear whether these would be new or existing employees. Noting this and in the absence of any substantive evidence regarding public benefits, I conclude that the development would have a harmful effect on the setting and significance of the Listed Building and would not meet the requirements of section 66 of the Act. This harm would not be outweighed by public benefits.
15. The development is contrary to policies DMD37 and DMD44 of the Development Management Document (DMD) adopted November 2014 (DMD), policies CP30 and CP31 of The Enfield Plan Core Strategy 2010-2025 adopted November 2010 (CS), policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan March 2021 (LP) and to relevant guidance in the Framework. These policies and this guidance require, amongst other things, that development is appropriate for its context and conserves heritage assets.

Living Conditions

16. As stated, the front part of the Listed Building is in use as residential flats following the grant of planning permission in 2020. This part of the building contains several windows overlooking the appeal site and site of the storage area. In addition, the vehicular access to the site is positioned next to the flats. There are also residential properties located to the rear of the appeal site on Coombe Corner, the rear elevations of which face towards the site. The rear gardens of these properties abut up to the rear boundary of the site.
17. Concerns have been raised by a local resident in relation to noise and outlook.

18. The appellant states that there would only be one vehicular movement each day in connection with the use, this would be a 7.5 tonne panel van. Whilst this could be conditioned and would limit the noise and disturbance that would result from vehicle movements, the loading, unloading and organising of materials would also likely generate noise and disturbance. Given the proximity of the external storage area to nearby residential properties, this would be likely to have a materially harmful effect on the living conditions of occupiers of these properties. This is notwithstanding the presence of other nearby commercial premises and roads which also generate noise as well as the previous use of the site in connection with the police station, which appears to have ceased some time ago. I do not consider that this matter could be adequately addressed by the imposition of an operating hours condition as suggested by the appellant.
19. In reaching this decision, I have had regard to the submitted noise assessment¹ which concludes that there would be a low adverse impact on nearby residential occupiers. However, it appears that the noise assessment only considered HGV movements and did not consider noise generated by the loading, unloading and organising of materials. I also note that only one noise measurement position was chosen and that this was not at any of the nearest residential properties. Consequently, I do not consider that the noise assessment adequately demonstrates that nearby residential occupiers would not be unduly affected by noise and disturbance.
20. Given the position of the storage area relative to nearby residential properties and its relatively small area, subject to the imposition of a suitably worded condition controlling its height and spread, I do not consider that it would unduly restrict the outlook for nearby residential occupiers. Though I note that concerns have been raised about the recent use of the site resulting in a blighted outlook, as stated, the existing and previous use of the site for storage appears to exceed the level of use the subject of this appeal.
21. Taking the above matters into consideration, whilst the outlook of nearby residential occupiers would not be unduly affected by the storage use, based on the evidence before me, I am concerned that it would have a materially adverse effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential property having particular regard to noise and disturbance. The development is therefore contrary to policies D3 and D14 of the LP, policies CP30 and CP32 of the CS, Policy DMD68 of the DMD and relevant paragraphs of the Framework. These policies and this guidance require development to, amongst other things, have regard to their context, deliver amenity, manage noise and minimise noise pollution.

Parking, Servicing, Refuse Storage and Highway and Pedestrian Safety

22. There is an existing vehicular access into the site from Green Lanes. This is shared with the residential flats within the Listed Building. It appears that the approved site layout for the flats includes the provision of 6 car parking spaces to serve the flats positioned to the rear of a bin and cycle store building to the right-hand side of the vehicular access. At the time of my visit, the car parking spaces for the flats were not present, with external storage taking place to the rear of the bin/cycle store building.

¹ KP acoustics BS4142 Assessment Report – Report 27723.BS4141.01 Rev.A

23. A Transport Technical Note² was submitted with the application together with a swept path analysis for a 7.5 tonne panel van (Ref AVAL/93056/0000/001A). When determining the application, the Council expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of the submitted information and whether it was sufficient for the effect of the use to be properly assessed.
24. Whilst I note that there are some discrepancies within the submitted information, it nevertheless sets out that there is good visibility at the existing vehicular access point, that car parking provision would be made for 1 vehicle notwithstanding that staff would use public transport and there would be no visitors/customers and that up to 2 cycle parking spaces would be provided in an undercover cycle store adjacent to the office building.
25. However, the submitted swept path analysis is based on an old site layout plan, and it does not show the existing bin/cycle store building adjacent to the site entrance or the approved car parking spaces for the flats to the rear of that building. Consequently, I cannot be certain that sufficient turning provision exists and can be provided for a 7.5 tonne panel van which would be used to transport materials to and from the site. In addition, there is no plan to indicate where a car parking space would be located if one is to be provided and how this would affect the available turning space. I am however satisfied that there would be sufficient space within the site to provide cycle parking and refuse storage and that these matters could be controlled by condition.
26. Taking the above matters into consideration, I conclude that it has not been demonstrated that sufficient turning provision can be provided within the site, particularly if car parking is to be provided. Consequently, I cannot be certain that the development would not result in unsafe vehicular movements associated with the use and that these would not have a severe adverse effect on highway and pedestrian safety. It is therefore contrary to policies T4, T5 and T6 of the LP, policies CP24 and CP25 of the CS and policies DMD45 and DMD47 of the DMD. These policies, amongst other things, require development proposals to help remove barriers to cycling, to provide an appropriate level of parking, to provide safe, convenient and accessible routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to provide suitable servicing facilities.

Principle of Use

27. Both parties appear to agree that the external storage use is a B8 use. The Council considers that such uses can only be permitted outside of designated industrial areas if all of the criteria listed in DMD Policy DMD23 are met. This includes that the use should be compatible with surrounding uses and that there should be no adverse impact on surrounding areas.
28. Part 2 of DMD Policy DMD23 is titled industrial development outside designated industrial areas. It appears to relate to proposals for new industrial/warehousing and related development. In the absence of any evidence to demonstrate how the external storage use can be considered to be industrial/warehousing and related development, such as a glossary definition or supporting text within the DMD, then I do not consider that this policy is directly relevant to the development before me, and I do not find any conflict with DMD Policy DMD23. There is therefore no in principle objection to the use in this location.

² Aval Consulting Group 22nd January 2024

Other Matters

29. In reaching my decision I note that the appellant is a local business and that there would be economic benefits associated with the development. I also note that the development would re-use an existing building and would take place on a previously developed site in an accessible location. Finally, I note the support for business development and the re-use of land in the Framework. I attach moderate weight to the benefits associated with the development. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
30. The Council has referred to the fact that planning permission has been granted for the development of a residential terrace towards the rear of the site in the same position as the existing office building and site of the proposed external storage use. However, I have been provided with copies of documentation relating to planning permission reference 17/03314/FUL referred to by the Council including a copy of the decision notice and approved plans. These do not show that permission was granted for a residential terrace by this planning permission. In any event, as I am not granting planning permission, any concerns relating to overlapping permissions is not relevant to my decision.

Conclusion

31. Whilst there is no objection to the principle of the development, it would result in an adverse effect on the setting and significance of the Listed Building, it would adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby residential property having particular regard to noise and disturbance and it has not been demonstrated that it would not adversely affect highway and pedestrian safety.
32. Therefore, for the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Beverley Wilders

INSPECTOR