



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2025

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/25/3363963

Land At Trafford Park Road, Trafford Park, Streford M17 1FR

- 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 Mr Sam Fisher against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 114618/FUL/24.
 - The development proposed is continuation of use of site as a waste transfer station with amendment to site layout, extension to existing waste handling building; erection of new lean-to canopy over existing waste recycling plant and addition of two storey modular office building.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Planning permission for a waste transfer station (WTS) and end of life vehicles depollution site (ELV) was granted by the Council in 2020 (application ref 100117/FUL/20, referred to below as the 'original permission'). Since then, there have been changes in land ownership, and the overall site area has reduced. The area originally intended for ELV depollution no longer forms part of the site, and that use is not taking place. A WTS is operational on the remaining part of the site.
3. In terms of overall site area, the current WTS use is largely consistent with that shown on the original permission. However, the site layout is different from that shown on the approved drawing, particularly in the area along the road frontage. Following discussions with the Council's enforcement team, the appeal proposal was submitted to test the merits of the existing, unauthorised layout, with further changes aimed at rationalising the internal layout and improving safety.
4. There is disagreement between the parties about whether or not the original permission has been formally implemented, but either way, the principle of a waste use here is acceptable. The site falls within a large area of Trafford Park which is allocated for waste uses under policy 5 of the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan 2012 (Waste Plan).
5. In granting the original permission, the Council considered that the scheme complied with relevant policy in the Core Strategy 2012 and Waste Plan. The original permission is a material consideration in this appeal, but what is now proposed is different. I must decide the appeal based on its own merits, and in accordance with policies which apply now. These include those within the recently adopted Places for Everyone Plan 2024 (PfE), which forms part of the statutory development plan for Trafford. The Trafford Design Code Supplementary Planning

Document 2024 (TDC) does not have full development plan weight, but is still an important consideration in this appeal.

6. The appellant has provided a copy of an Environmental Permit, which allows the site to deal with up to 75,000 tonnes of waste. The appellant has advised that the amount of throughput is currently much less, and would continue to be so under the proposed scheme.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

8. The appeal site is located within Trafford Park industrial estate, which covers a large area with considerable variation in character. However, along Trafford Park Road, much of the built form is set back from the road frontage, often behind grassed verges, some of which are tree lined. The rail tracks which once ran along one side of Trafford Park Road are still visible in some areas, with development generally set behind the former railway line.
9. Where verges are absent and the rail tracks removed, open fencing frequently allows views into the industrial sites beyond, with areas of car parking providing an open aspect. The extent of landscaping at the nearby Proctor and Gamble plant is unusual, but nonetheless the area around the appeal site has a spacious, and in places green, character.
10. Although the appeal concerns a waste use in a large industrial estate, that does not mean that design and visual matters are not of relevance. Indeed, for some businesses located here, the quality of the environment will be important. The TDC includes a section on Trafford Park, which highlights the long standing efforts to enhance the appearance of the area, through greening and an emphasis on landscape led design. The appeal site is not large enough to accommodate landscaping, but visual matters were taken into account in the Council's assessment of the original scheme.
11. The appeal site has a fairly short frontage onto Trafford Park Road, and as accepted under the original permission, incorporates the area once occupied by the railway line. This means that the site extends almost to the road edge. Mesh fencing has been installed along the frontage, as shown on the previously approved drawing. However, to the north of the entrance gate, the space identified for parking on the approved drawing is instead occupied by two hardcore bays and a woodbin.
12. The hardcore bays are enclosed by high walls formed of large concrete blocks. These are sited just behind the fencing, giving the site frontage a hard, solid edge, instead of the more open area which the original permission provides for. The hardcore bays and woodbin, which are unauthorised in this position, now effectively form the site boundary in visual terms, despite the existence of the fence. As the bays are proposed to be retained in their current position, boundary treatment cannot be dealt with by a condition, as suggested by the appellant.
13. Whilst not the case at the time of my visit, photos provided by the Council show that the level of material stored in the hardcore bays have at times significantly

exceeded the height of the block walls, further contributing to the visual prominence of the site. The height of stored material could be controlled by a condition, but this would result in an enforcement burden for the Council if the site was not managed in accordance with the permission. The planning history does not instil confidence that this would always happen.

14. The site office/canteen is located to the south of the entrance gates. It is positioned in a similar location to that shown on the approved drawing, but is formed of two stacked portacabins, rather than the consented single storey structure. The additional height over and above that approved in the original permission means that the office/canteen is far more obvious and noticeable in the street scene.
15. The combination of the high, solid concrete block walls, two storey office/canteen building and woodbin along the road frontage means that the site is highly prominent, despite the short road frontage. By pushing built form out to the road edge, with minimal set back, the impression is of a site which is too small to accommodate the scale of the existing use. This view is reinforced by an internal inspection.
16. From the inside, it is clear that the space available is intensively used. In addition to the permanent built structures around the site boundaries, piles of stored material and plant encroach into the central areas, providing a constrained space for internal vehicle movements. I note concerns raised by people who work in the area about the parking and storing of large vehicles, skips and other equipment along the road frontage. As well as the associated risks to highway safety, use of the road frontage in this way further contributes to the prominence of the site, and detract from the spacious character of the area.
17. The appeal scheme incorporates a number of changes to the site layout, aimed at making better use of the space and improving safety. However, compared with the existing situation, from Trafford Park Road the visual impact of the appeal scheme would not be significantly different.
18. The submitted drawing shows that the two storey office/canteen building would be moved forward slightly, even closer to the road. This would allow the toilet/welfare unit to be repositioned, also closer to the frontage. The woodbin would be moved further back into the site to accommodate the repositioned weighbridge, but the large concrete block walls of the hardcore bays would be retained in the same position as existing.
19. The proposed extension to the tipping & sorting shed, and the addition of a cover over the trommel and picking line, are an expected form of development in a waste site. The structures to be extended and covered are sited at the rear and side of the site, and would not be readily visible from outside the site. On their own, these elements of the scheme would be acceptable. However, the other proposed changes would fail to reduce the prominence of the use and the associated harm to the character and appearance of the area, which results from the siting of built form very close to the road frontage.
20. The submitted swept path analysis shows how a vehicle could enter and exit the site in forward gear, having made use of the weighbridge which would be moved to the entrance. Whilst such a manoeuvre may be achievable, vehicles would need to

use much of the available space for reversing. This would require the necessary space within the site to remain clear of stored material at all times.

21. There is no space for parking within the existing site meaning that operatives and visitors must park elsewhere, but there are very limited options available for on-street parking in the vicinity. The proposal shows an area for parking being created within the site. However, the appellant has confirmed that there would be no change to the scale of the operation taking place at the site, or the number of operatives. Given that, I am not convinced that creating and retaining the proposed parking spaces would be realistic or practical.
22. The intensity of the activity on site and the amount of waste being dealt with in a confined space means that parked vehicles could well be in the way of site operations. The proposed layout drawing shows cars parked very close to skips containing material waiting to be bailed. Given the height of materials being stored at the time of my visit, with skips full of tyres on top of the welfare block, there would also be a distinct possibility of damage to parked cars from activity taking place very close by.
23. Even with the proposed layout changes, the site would be cramped. The lack of space within the site means that continued use of the highway for parking is likely, both immediately in front of the site and further afield. Because of this, I am unconvinced that the development would function well over its lifetime, as required by paragraph 135a) of the National Planning Policy Framework.
24. At the time of my visit, there was lots of activity at the appeal site, and I have no doubt that the WTS provides a valuable local facility for the storage, sorting and processing of waste, which contributes to maintaining recycling rates in the borough. The overall layout of the scheme is appropriate for a WTS, allowing compliance with the Environment Agency's regulatory regime. However, the constrained size of the site has resulted in expansion of the site to the very edge of the road frontage, with overspill parking of vehicles and skips a related problem. I am not convinced that the proposed scheme would resolve these issues, so the existing harm to the character and appearance of the area would remain.
25. Owing to the appearance of the proposed development, particularly along the road frontage, the appeal scheme does not comply with PfE policy JP-P1, which requires that development respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality.
26. There is further conflict with the requirements of the TDC, in particular codes CNB1, which requires that boundary treatments are in keeping with the surrounding context, and CNP1, which requires buildings to be sited so as to create a positive identity and sense of place.

Other Matters

27. The submitted Environmental Management System (Oaktree Environmental Ltd Nov 2024) refers to site specific management plans for the control of dust, odour, litter, pests/scavengers and noise. If the development was otherwise acceptable, operation of these controls could be secured by a condition. However, this lack of harm does not overcome the deficiencies of the scheme identified above.

28. I note references to positive discussions with the Council's enforcement team prior to the application being submitted, but I have assessed the proposed development on its merits and concluded that it would continue to result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, for the reasons set out.
29. The appellant has referred to a previous permission for a biomass plant on the site, but has provided little detail about the scheme or any visual impact it may have had. I have given little weight to that permission, which appears to have been allowed a considerable amount of time ago, under different policies.

Conclusion

30. The principle of a waste use is acceptable here, but maximising the internal space by siting structures as close as possible to the road frontage causes harm to the character and appearance of the area, which would not be alleviated through the changes proposed in the appeal scheme. The proposal conflicts with the adopted development plan, and there are no other considerations which outweigh this. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR