



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by K Williams MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/W/25/3365631

Beehive Garage, Chorley New Road, Lostock, Bolton, BL6 4LW

- 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 Browns Garden Buildings Limited against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 18764/24.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retrospective planning for an outbuilding.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The outbuilding subject of the appeal has been erected in accordance with the submitted plans on site. I have considered the appeal on this basis.
3. Within the second reasons for refusal the Council referred to the Bolton Council Accessibility, Transport and Road Safety Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 2013 (SPD) and the House Extension SPD, adopted 2012. As copies of the SPD's have not been provided, I have reviewed them online and it has formed part of my assessment of the appeal proposal. As they were referred to in the second reason for refusal there is no breach of natural justice by me considering their content.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Highway safety

5. The appeal site comprises an industrial unit and its front forecourt. The site is located on Austins Lane near the corner with the busy Chorley New Road and exit arm of the Beehive Roundabout. The site is between the Beehive car wash and homes at Beehive Court. There is a small open covered blue structure for charging electric vehicles within the forecourt area. There are further homes and industrial units opposite the site, and access to a car park for a public house and hotel nearby.

6. The appellant operates an existing garden building business. The outbuilding is a small single storey partially timber clad structure and is an example of one of the products the appellant produces. It is positioned in front of the industrial building, on the forecourt. It is located close to the pedestrian footway, which at this point does not have a dropped kerb. Nevertheless, the proposal has resulted in a loss of four parking spaces.
7. Policy P5 of the Bolton Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted 2 March 2011 (the Core Strategy) requires parking to take into account the associated parking standards set out in Appendix 3 of the Core Strategy. Notwithstanding the Council has twice referred to parking standards for a one-bedroom dwelling, it has also referenced a parking requirement of one space per 60m² of the site, not floor area, for a B2 Use. Neither party has provided me with a definitive site area, however the existing plans refer to a site of 612.8m², which would necessitate a maximum of ten parking spaces. However, based on the evidence before me, even if some of the public footway is excluded from this measurement, the size of the site, as well as the size of the main unit floor area of 321m² is likely to require more than the proposed four parking spaces set out in the Council's maximum parking standards.
8. Staff can park bicycles within the building, and there are nearby bus stops. As the proposal is retrospective it would have been possible to clearly identify typical parking numbers and provide firm details of transport arrangements. However, it is not clear if existing employees use these methods and I cannot be certain that they or any future employees would not have a car.
9. It has therefore not been demonstrated that four parking spaces and forecourt are sufficient for the seven employees and any business vehicles, nor has any form of management plan for this been put forward. Therefore even if customer appointments are pre-booked, it is not clear if there would be a designated space available to use
10. The appeal proposal could therefore result in a parking requirement over and above the four parking spaces provided. It is possible that the proposal could result in some additional demand for on-street parking. I did observe a relatively quiet road environment during my weekday morning visit. However, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence regarding on-street parking or a parking survey which could ascertain parking availability or where displaced vehicles could safely park. There are numerous stretches on Austin Lane with double yellow lines further limiting space to park close to the site. These factors limit the weight I can give to the provision of safe, convenient, and available on-street parking.
11. The absence of suitable on-street parking arrangements could lead to an increased demand for indiscriminate on-street parking in the area and at the appeal site. This would be detrimental to highway safety for all road users trying to cross or manoeuvre vehicles, and occupiers of nearby homes who may be blocked from entering their own driveways. Pavement parking would affect pedestrians of all mobility levels safely using footways. This is of concern given the Austin Lane also serves residential homes, where it would be expected that people would walk in the area.

12. The appeal business sells pre-fabricated outbuildings. On face value this may not necessitate as many ad-hoc vehicular movements to the site as a former vehicle garage may have. However, it has not been substantiated that the use was not capable of accommodating its own parking requirements off-street. Therefore, this former use does not alter my view about the proposal before me.
13. The appellant has referred to moving the outbuilding to provide five parking spaces. However, there are no provisions for me to accept amendments as it is important that what is considered at appeal is essentially the same scheme that was considered by the Council as it may be unfair on interested parties and consultees whose views and comments were made about the original proposals¹.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on highway safety with particular regard to parking provision. There is conflict with Core Strategy Policy P5 and Policy JP-C8 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2022 to 2039, adopted 21 March 2024 (the Joint DPD). Together these seek to ensure developments provide parking appropriate to its scale which is safe. For similar reasons, the proposal would not accord with the Accessibility, Transport and Road Safety and the House Extensions SPD, which seek to ensure satisfactory parking and that the loss of parking would not be of general detriment to highway safety.

Character and appearance

15. Taking into account the presence of industrial and commercial premises and the nearby residential properties, the character and appearance of the area is somewhat mixed. There are being a clear variation in the external finishes, designs and materials of the buildings located in the area. Residential properties were constructed from brick or finished in render. As such the use of stone in buildings was not particularly evident.
16. The appeal building is seen against a backdrop of the large industrial building. Although it is of differing materials, the outbuilding is subservient to it and has a neat, compact and functional appearance. It is also lower than the nearby yellow car wash canopy and bright blue electric vehicle charging enclosure, and its muted material tones are less impactful than these. The external appearance incorporates small windows, which have deep reveals, these are darkly coloured and not obtrusive within the area. The roof is shallow and low. Although the charging structure is open, the outbuilding has a similar depth as the nearby covered electric vehicle charging structure and the outbuilding presents itself as a similarly commercial element in the streetscene.
17. The overall building line along Austins Lane is not strictly regimented. This is due to factors such as variations in land levels, the space available in front of dwellings and the curvature of the road. The road's gentle curve and the presence of walls and vegetation in residential gardens contribute to screening the building from certain viewpoints down Austins Lane. Consequently, the combination of existing surrounding structures and layout of buildings plays a role in how the new proposal integrates visually.
18. The outbuilding does not appear dominating or incongruous when seen in the context of surrounding buildings and structures. The proposal is satisfactorily

¹ Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England, 30 June 2025.

placed within a predominantly commercial environment and in the context of an extensive road infrastructure. It is also set sufficiently far enough away from homes to ensure that it does not have a jarring presence on the residential character of Austins Lane.

19. I conclude that the proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policy OA1 of and Policy JP-P1 of the Joint DPD. Together these seek to ensure development respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the area.

Planning Balance and conclusion

20. The proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the area. This weighs neither for nor against the development as it is a requirement of all new development. Although the proposal would support the appellant's business there is insufficient evidence regarding the scale of the benefits. However, the above matters do not outweigh the harm to highway safety.
21. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

K Williams

INSPECTOR