
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/W/24/3353866

62 Mutley Plain, Plymouth PL4 6LF

- 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 M Fawad of Quickfix against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00642/FUL.
 - The development proposed is: security shutters to the front ground floor shop window and entrance.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the heading above, I have taken the description of development from the application form, but I have removed superfluous text in the interests of conciseness.
3. Whilst the application form and the Council's decision notice state that this is a retrospective application, I have considered the proposal as shown on the plans provided.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site forms part of a parade of shops on Mutley Plain, situated within a busy retail area. The parade comprises three-storey buildings, with ground floors featuring a variety of shopfront designs. Their glazed shopfronts provide active frontages to the street, creating a welcoming shopping environment and making a positive contribution to the character of the area.
6. Paragraph 15.26 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 Supplementary Planning Document adopted July 2020 (SPD) advises that security shutters should be sensitively designed to maintain active frontages and street scenes outside of business hours.
7. The proposed metal roller shutter would have a solid and utilitarian appearance, and it would extend across the full width and height of the shopfront. When closed, it would create a grey, blank frontage that would appear visually harsh and intrusive within the street scene. As such, the appeal development would remove

an active frontage and create an incongruous feature that fails to achieve good design in this retail area.

8. Whilst the proposed shutter would be retractable and therefore not visible during trading hours, it would nevertheless present a solid and visually intrusive appearance when closed. As security shutters are typically in use outside trading hours, the resulting blank frontage would create a defensive and unsympathetic appearance that disrupts the architectural character of the host building and undermines the overall quality of the street scene. As such, retractability would not mitigate the harm that I have identified above.
9. I note the appellant's concerns regarding the security of high-value items and I appreciate that the site may be located within a high-risk area. Nonetheless, while I recognise the importance of security, I ascribe more weight to the need to preserve the character and appearance of the area. Moreover, the introduction of a solid shutter, creating a blank frontage at street level, may itself attract other forms of anti-social behaviour, such as graffiti, and would also reduce the level of natural surveillance by preventing observation into the premises from the street.
10. The appellant indicates that alternative security measures such as laminated glass, internal mesh grills, and glass doors, are not adequate to protect the items within the shop. In this case, whilst a roller shutter may be an option to provide required security, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the design of the appeal proposal would be the only means of providing adequate security for the appeal site. In particular, the Council noted that other forms of roller shutters have been approved in the city.
11. There are a number of examples of roller shutters mentioned by the appellant. Most of them are located on the opposite side of Mutley Plain and No 52a is situated near the junction of Ford Park Road and Mutley Plain. Notwithstanding these, I have not been provided with evidence that any of them have been granted planning permission or that they have become lawful. Therefore, I ascribe them limited weight.
12. Furthermore, some of these shutters are of different designs, for example, the roller shutters at Superdrug and Pickle Deli only cover part of their shopfronts. Therefore, I do not find them comparable to the appeal development, and they do not change my conclusion on this main issue.
13. The appellant has indicated that no substantial objections were raised by interested parties. Be this as it may, it makes no difference to my overall conclusion.
14. The appellant states that there would be financial implications associated with both the removal of the existing shutter system and the installation of an alternative security arrangement. But no specific evidence has been provided in this regard and in any event, these points do not outweigh the harm identified above.
15. In conclusion, I find that the appeal development would result in an incongruous feature that would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to Policy DEV20 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2019), that requires development proposals to meet good standards of design, contribute positively to townscape, and to protect and improve the quality of the built environment.

Conclusion

16. 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. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

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INSPECTOR