
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2026

by **R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/W/25/3375444

1 Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester M1 1RG

- 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 PLK Chicken UK Ltd against the decision of Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 143835/FO/2025.
 - The development proposed is described as “elevational alterations to form revised collection window and retention of entrance doors.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has raised no issue in respect of the entrance doors which have been installed on the side elevation of the restaurant unit. Based on the evidence before me and my observations on site, I have no reason to form a different view.
3. The Council has confirmed that the Decision Notice referred in error to policies JP-C4 and JP-S4 (draft) of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2024) (PfE) and omitted to refer to PfE Policy JP-C5. The appellant has had an opportunity to comment on this during the appeal process.
4. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published for consultation during the course of this appeal. Having regard to its content and the nature of the disputed matters, I am satisfied that no prejudice would arise to either party by proceeding to issue this decision without seeking comments.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposed collection window on:
 - the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and
 - the pedestrian environment, with particular regards to safety, anti-social behaviour, and the regeneration of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is a ground floor restaurant unit located in one corner of One Piccadilly Gardens, a prominent six-storey building. It lies within the commercial heart of the City Centre with frontages to Piccadilly, Portland Street, Parker Street and Piccadilly Gardens, an important area of public realm and open space.

7. At ground floor, One Piccadilly has been designed with almost continuous double height glazing with narrow mullions and glazing bars, recessed behind red brick columns or pilasters. These are aligned through to the upper floors which gives cohesive proportions and a strong architectural design quality to the building, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of Piccadilly Gardens and the surrounding area.
8. It is proposed to install a collection window on the Piccadilly elevation of the restaurant, which would replace one of the four large ground floor glazing panels shown on the pre-existing plans. To form the sliding window in the upper portion, three additional vertical mullions and two glazing bars would be introduced which would noticeably increase the depth of the frame. Despite being a matching aluminium grey colour, this would disrupt the pattern and cohesion of glazing which forms a key architectural feature of the building. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the guidance in the Council's 'Design Guide: Commercial Frontages' (2024) that framed solutions for shopfronts may be considered where they are sympathetic to the building.
9. While the frame of the proposed window would be narrower than the double doors on the same elevation, it would disrupt both the horizontal and vertical glazing pattern. Moreover, to allow them to slide open, the alignment of the two panes would be staggered such that neither would be flush with the existing glazing panels either side. This would add a discordant depth to the shopfront, which would be apparent even when the windows were closed.
10. Consistent with the guidance in the Council's 'Shopfront and Signage Design Guide', the proposed frosted glazing panel would be at a low level which would still allow some visibility through to the restaurant. However, overall, the proposal would conflict with this guidance insofar as it requires alterations to existing shopfronts to be considered in the context of the whole building and should reflect and positively respond to the architectural expression and proportions of the existing building.
11. I observed this corner of Piccadilly to be very busy with pedestrians, and the proposed collection window would be prominent particularly from the pavement alongside and when using the pedestrian crossing from the direction of Lever Street. While the proposed alteration may be modest in scale relative to the wider ground floor frontage, from these viewpoints it would nevertheless appear an incongruous addition, which would erode the design quality of the building to the detriment of the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed collection window would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. It would conflict with PfE policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P1 and policies DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) (CS). Together, these require development to be of quality design that has regard to, respects or enhances the character and identity of the locality in terms of design and is appropriate in form and detailing.
13. It would further conflict with CS Policy EN1 and saved Policy DC14.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) (UDP) in so far as they require that development in the City Centre Character Area contributes positively to the experience of all at street level and that proposals relating to shopfronts are in keeping with the character of the building.

Pedestrian environment

14. Delivery riders already visit the restaurant, and the proposed collection window is intended to improve the efficiency of the existing operation by providing a direct point for the collection of online orders. When I visited the site during the early evening, I observed several delivery drivers crossing the pavement on bicycles or e-bikes and congregating around the collection window which has been installed on the Piccadilly elevation of the restaurant. Other riders were also sitting close-by on the steps at the base of the Wellington statue. I appreciate that this is a 'snapshot' in time. However, as I did not observe such a congregation of riders elsewhere around Piccadilly Gardens, or the surrounding streets, it can reasonably be attributed to the location of the existing collection window.
15. The appellant has submitted an Operational Management Plan (OMP), which could be secured by condition. This seeks to control some aspects of the delivery operation and the actions of riders. It states that delivery riders would use existing short-stay cycle parking provision in the area and walk to the collection window to pick-up an online order. However, riders are incentivised based on customer reviews and ratings, and therefore realistically they would choose to park and wait in the most convenient (quickest) place for a collection. While there are cycle stands on the other side of the Wellington statue only a short distance away, none of these were in use by delivery riders at the time of my site visit. Despite the intentions of the OMP, it is therefore most likely that riders would ride up to the collection window to pick-up a delivery.
16. While the collection window would face a wide section of pavement, delivery riders congregating close to the restaurant would noticeably restrict its effective width, creating a 'pinch point' between the building, the Wellington statue and a street tree. This would cause conflict between pedestrian and bicycle (and e-bike) movements. Further, it would obstruct the flow of pedestrians in an area of high footfall, close to the entrance to Piccadilly Gardens which notably forms part of a corridor for commuters arriving at Piccadilly and London Road stations.
17. The appellant asserts that software platforms allow delivery riders to be tracked, and provide advice and procedures for individual premises, but it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated how the OMP would be effectively managed or enforced. Although the OMP would be overseen by a manager, the delivery riders would not be employees of the restaurant. Therefore, it would be very difficult to influence or enforce unwanted behaviour, and it is unlikely that if seen, a restaurant manager would (or should) challenge or try to disperse riders congregating or loitering on the public highway.
18. I appreciate that the OMP includes a mechanism to log complaints and an escalation process, whereby delivery riders would be warned and subsequently excluded from collecting from the restaurant if repeat breaches occur. However, one excluded rider would simply be replaced by another, who may or may not choose to comply with the OMP. Moreover, while the restaurant would be able to control the number of orders to manage collections, this would not address issues of delivery riders congregating or loitering in anticipation of an order.
19. For these reasons, I do not find the provisions of the OMP to be sufficiently enforceable or realistic in effecting behavioural change of delivery riders. Nor would the collection window be a clear improvement over the pre-existing

arrangement, whereby delivery riders would typically wait inside the restaurant and the congregation of riders on the pavement in one area would be avoided.

20. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) identify that Piccadilly Gardens is a 'hot spot' for antisocial behaviour. I have little evidence before me to demonstrate that delivery riders in isolation cause such issues. However, for the reasons I have given, the proposed window would result in the congregation or loitering of people in this location, which GMP actively discourage to avoid a risk of further anti-social behaviour. Moreover, although it would not prejudice the Council's proposals for physical changes to Piccadilly Gardens, it would create an unwelcoming, intimidating pedestrian environment which would conflict with wider aims to improve the perception of safety in this area.
21. I therefore conclude that the proposed collection window would cause harm to the pedestrian environment, with particular regards to safety and anti-social behaviour. It would conflict with PfE policies JP-C5 and JP-P1 which require streets to be designed and managed to make a significant positive contribution to the quality of place, ensuring they are safe, welcoming for all, with enjoyable routes free of obstacles and reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.
22. It would further conflict with CS policies SP1, CC5, T1 and DM1 and saved UDP policies DC10 and DC22. Together, these seek a high-quality environment and require new development to improve pedestrian routes and movement, the pedestrian environment and the scope for accessible public realm improvements.

Other Matters

23. I appreciate that the proposal sought to address concerns raised by the Council in respect of a previous planning application¹ and is intended to improve the operational efficiency of the restaurant. There would also be some practical benefits to riders to being able to keep an eye on bicycles and e-bikes during collections. However, these are not matters which alter my conclusions in respect of the main issues above.
24. The appeal site is close to the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and to the Grade II listed Wellington statue² and Queen Victoria monument³. Sections 72(1) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area and preserving the setting of listed buildings. The Council raised no concerns in respect of these designated heritage assets and given the nature and scale of the proposed development, I have no reason to form a different view.

Conclusion

25. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Gravett, INSPECTOR

¹ LPA Ref. 137200/FO/2023

² Historic England List Entry No: 1271115

³ Historic England List Entry No: 1246945