
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2016

by Caroline Jones BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 30th September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/16/3152776
415 Whitehorse Road, Croydon CR7 8SD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Michael Ufondu, Top Carers Nursing Agency against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/01930/P, dated 22 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is installation of replacement shutters.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replacement shutters at 415 Whitehorse Road, Croydon CR7 8SD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/01930/P, dated 22 March 2016, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location plan (unnumbered) and CR-75.
 - 2) Notwithstanding Condition 1) above, within three months of the date of this decision, full details of the roller shutter curtain shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The curtain shall be non-other than an open link grille design, installed in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter.

Preliminary matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the Councils decision notice and appeal form. It adequately and concisely describes the development.
3. I saw at my site visit that the housing and mechanism for the shutters has already been installed. Given the time of day of my site visit, the roller shutters were retracted and I was unable to determine the exact appearance of the shutters when closed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
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Reasons

5. 415 Whitehorse Road is a two storey property with a commercial unit to the ground floor and residential to the first floor. The unit is currently occupied by a nursing agency. It is situated on a prominent site on a busy roundabout and forms the end property of a terraced row of houses. The appeal property is attached to a small parade of shops by a single storey unit. There are numerous retail units in the vicinity, many of which have roller shutters with forward projecting housing.
6. I have been provided with a photograph showing the previous shopfront with open grille roller shutters and external housing above the shop window only. The housing and shutters have been replaced so that they now extend to cover the front entrance to the unit as well as the front window.
7. The Council has published 'Shopfronts and Signs-Supplementary Guidance No.1' (SPG) and an addendum to the SPG 'Shopfront Security Addendum' (addendum) which offers guidance on such matters. In relation to external roller shutters, the SPG and addendum states that solid roller shutters can adversely affect the character of the building, streetscene, undermine the public realm and the desire for welcoming and vibrant places. It adds that they can be acceptable if they allow a clear view of the shop and provide an open appearance from the street and that non solid shutters with open link grille design should be considered. In relation to the housing the SPG and addendum states that it should be contained within the design of the shopfront, preferably behind the fascia and should not be external to it.
8. The property is not of any particular design merit nor is it within a conservation area. Whilst it was not possible to ascertain the exact appearance of the roller shutters on site given that they were retracted, the appellant has stated that the shutters are a non-solid open link design, in line with the Council's guidance. This ensures that the entire window space and glass panels of the door are not obscured allowing light from the office to illuminate the outside street and allowing unimpaired views in. I am satisfied that the open link grille design of the shutters can be secured through a condition thus ensuring they accord with the guidance within the SPG and addendum.
9. In terms of the housing, the forward projection of the shopfront with monopitch roof, together with the coordinated colour scheme ensures that the housing is unified with the appearance of the shopfront. Furthermore, many of the retail premises within the vicinity of the appeal property have external housing, many of an inferior design to the one before me. Given the above and the context of the locality, there is no material harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Therefore, I conclude that the development has not had a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. I find that there is no overriding conflict with the aims of the SPG and addendum and Policy 7.4 of the London Plan (consolidated with amendments since 2011). These seek, amongst other things, to ensure high quality design in order to protect the character and appearance of an area.

Conditions

11. As the roller shutters have been installed, the statutory time limit condition is not necessary. A condition requiring the open grille design of the shutters is necessary in order to ensure a satisfactory appearance.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Caroline Jones

INSPECTOR