
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by Rachel Walmsley BSc MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/17/3169497

911-917 Romford Road, Manor Park, London E12 5JT

- 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 Yuksel Ince against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref 16/01592/FUL, dated 25 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is retention of canopy and shutter to the front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. At the time of my site visit the development being applied for existed on site. I have based my decision on what I saw on site, together with the submitted plans and details.

Main Issue

3. This is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site fronts Romford Road, a busy commercial thoroughfare which is recognised in policy SP7 of the Core Strategy¹ as a *Quality Movement Corridor and Linear Gateway*. The four lane road, together with the wide pavements on both sides creates a wide and open character to the area which is appreciated in long distance views in both directions along the road. Buildings are set well back from the pavement; the area between the pavement and the buildings forms a forecourt to many commercial premises. The forecourts contribute to the commercial character and vitality of the street; some forecourts are used to display goods, others, such as at car garages, are used to display car tyres and support garage related activities.
5. At the appeal site, groceries occupy the forecourt within an enclosure. In views in both directions along Romford Road, the canopy is a notable structure that is visually impermeable compared with the goods that are openly on display elsewhere within the street. The solid form of the canopy appears incongruous within the street and is harmful to its open character.

¹ Newham London, Newham 2027, Newham's Local Plan – The Core Strategy (adopted version January 2012)

6. The canopy also obscures the goods for sale as well as many of the activities associated with the buying and selling of goods. I agree with the appellant that the display of wares and an element of clutter can add to the vitality of a commercial area such as Romford Road. Indeed policy SP7 recognises the importance of active frontages to help stimulate social activity and interaction. However, the goods at the appeal site are enclosed which detracts from area's vitality.
7. The appellant asserts that the canopy feature is commonplace along Romford Road but I have no examples before me for consideration. It was not apparent from my observations on site that there are other structures within the street that are comparable to that proposed. I did note a canopy further along Romford Road that was hanging from above but this does not compare with the development proposed that encloses the goods for sale and rests on the ground.
8. In all, therefore, I find that the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the area and as a result is contrary to policies SP1 and SP3 of the Core Strategy, policies 7.1, 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan² which seek high quality development that respects and reinforces local distinctiveness, and policy SP7 as indicated.

Other matter

9. The development extends to the back of the pavement and therefore does not obstruct pedestrian movement. I do not concur with the Council, therefore, that the development is harmful to pedestrian safety. However, this lack of harm to pedestrian safety does not overcome the harm found to the character and appearance of the area for and therefore does not carry weight in favour of the appeal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and none of the material considerations indicate that the decision should be made, other than in accordance with the plan. The appeal is, therefore, dismissed.

R Walmsley

INSPECTOR

² The London Plan, The Spatial Development Strategy for London, Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011 (March 2016)