
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019

by S Hunt BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/19/3234256

120-122 Whitestile Road, Brentford TW8 9NW

- 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 Harneet Baweja against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01201/120-122/P1, dated 2 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a canopy to front of shop.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The canopy is in place, therefore I am considering this appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Whitestile Road is within a predominately residential area. The appeal site is a small convenience store with timber shopfront and large fascia sign above. It spans two properties which retain their domestic appearance at first floor level and there are two access doors to each side of the shopfront. The area is characterised by typical early 20th century terraced housing of uniform appearance with small front gardens and on street parking.
5. The canopy spans almost the entire width of the shopfront, and projects almost to the edge of the pavement. The timber structure has corrugated plastic to its roof and partially to the sides, providing shelter over the retail forecourt. When I visited the site the forecourt was in use for outdoor display of produce.
6. The Council has adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Shop front design guidelines' 2013. Design objective 8 specifically relates to canopies or awnings. It states that canopies or awnings of any type that obscure the shop front and cannot be fully retracted will not normally be acceptable, and that those made of plastic or PV materials will be discouraged.

7. The canopy is fixed, and it includes large expanses of corrugated plastic above the wooden frame; to this extent there is conflict with the SPD. I noted on my site visit that the canopy has a non-permanent appearance and the materials, whilst simple, do not appear to be durable nor high quality. The timber frame is slender, and the plastic is translucent, so it does not significantly obstruct visibility of the shop front. Nonetheless, the large scale of the structure and use of corrugated plastic is discordant with the host property and results in significant harm to the character and appearance of the predominately residential street scene.
8. The appellant suggests that a condition could be imposed requiring details of materials to be approved. However, it is not only the use of materials which is at odds with the host property and the surrounding area; I also find its scale harmful. I understand their concerns that the fruit and vegetables being displayed outside get affected by sunlight, but this has little bearing on my decision as there are alternative means of protecting the produce which would better comply with the SPD.
9. I conclude that the proposed canopy by virtue of its scale, prominence and use of materials would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area. It is contrary to Policies CC1 and CC2 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan 2015 which seek to secure development that sensitively and creatively responds to an area's character and to carefully consider external appearance through the use of high quality, durable materials and finishes. The proposal is also in conflict with design objective 8 of the SPD and with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework which expects developments to be sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Hunt

Inspector