



Appeal Decision

by David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/20/3244959

15 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon CR5 2RB

- 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 Wong of Tori Tamuro Izakaya against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 19/04738/FUL, dated 4 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is alterations to the shop front, timber cladding to the front and side elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to timber cladding to the front and side elevation. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to alterations to the shop front and planning permission is granted for alterations to the shop front at 15 Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon CR5 2RB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/04738/FUL, dated 4 October 2019, and subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 680.00; 680.01; and 680.02.

Procedural Matters

2. In response to travel restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic I consider that this appeal can be determined without the need for a physical site visit. This is because I have been able to reach a decision based on the information already available, supplemented by Google Street View and Google Earth. The Council has provided further photographs of the appeal site and the appellant has had the opportunity to comment on these. The appellant and the Council have agreed to the appeal proceeding on that basis.
3. The description of the development provided on the planning application form has been replaced by an amended version on the decision notice and in subsequent appeal documents. I consider that subsequent description to be more representative of the appeal proposal and I have therefore used it within this decision.
4. From the evidence before me, the development has commenced and appears to be substantially complete. I have proceeded to determine this appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is located within Coulsdon town centre, which contains a number of retail and other commercial uses. There are a variety of building designs within the town centre, although the predominant materials are brick and render with some limited use of mock-Tudor detailing.
7. The original building was of an understated appearance including a shop front and rendered elevations. As well as replacing the shop front, it is proposed to clad the front and side elevations in horizontal timber cladding with a stained varnished finish.
8. The timber cladding on the building is extensive, covering significant areas of two elevations which are prominent within the streetscape. Whilst the form and massing of the original building will still be apparent, the stained cladding will be of a darker and heavier appearance than the original rendered finish and will be an overdominant feature in views of the building.
9. The cladding will also not reflect the palette of materials used for the predominantly rendered buildings in the wider streetscape. Even within the varied commercial character of the town centre, the proposed cladding will be an incongruous feature. This obtrusive appearance will be exacerbated by extended views of the side elevation along the street enabled by low rise buildings and a lane to one side of the appeal site. Rather than introducing an element of interest, the prominent and alien appearance of the cladding detracts from the character of the streetscape.
10. Whilst the appeal site and the area in which it is located may not have a conservation designation, this does not negate the harm that will arise in respect of character and appearance.
11. I have had regard to the letters in support of the appeal. The proposal will support the development of a business and renovation of a building in what appears to be a vibrant town centre. However, these benefits could equally be achieved by a more appropriate design, even allowing for the wish to give an authentic Japanese appearance to the business. Reference has also been made to the use of tiles on a restaurant elsewhere in the town centre. However, I have not been given full details of this development, and so cannot be sure it represents a direct parallel to the appeal proposal on matters including the extent of cladding and the relationship with the host building and its neighbours. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.
12. I conclude that the timber cladding will lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the area. The proposal will therefore be contrary to the design requirements of Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 as well as Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016.
13. The Council highlights fire risk with reference to Draft Policy D11 of the emerging London Plan. However, this is not specified in the Council's reason

for refusal and, mindful of the stage of preparation of the emerging plan, this is not a determinative issue in this appeal.

14. In the Officer's report, the Council raises no objections to the replacement of the timber framed shopfront with a black aluminium framed shopfront and associated minor alterations. Based on the evidence before me I also consider that the replacement shopfront would not be harmful in respect of character and appearance. I will therefore issue a split decision to dismiss the appeal in relation to the timber cladding but allow it in relation to alterations to the shop front.
15. The Council has suggested a number of conditions should the appeal be allowed. A condition in respect of the approved plans is appropriate in the interests of certainty. A condition in respect of commencement is not required as the development has commenced. A condition in respect of facing materials is not required as this primarily relates to the cladding, which I have dismissed, and the details in respect of the shop front are specified on the submitted plans.

David Cross

INSPECTOR