



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by G Rollings BA (Hons) MAUD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15th October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/20/3249931
45 Bell Road, Hounslow, TW3 3NX

- 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 Hira Hadee against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 00108/45/P8, dated 16 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is change of shop front with glazing and installation of roller shutter.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the accessibility of the site.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site accommodates a two-storey building within a shopping parade close to the main shopping area of Hounslow. Its current appearance recalls the former pub use of the building, albeit with amended fascia signage. The proposal would involve the removal of the two bay windows and central entrance door at ground floor level, and replacement with floor-to-façade glass panels and doors, together with minor changes to the signage.
4. The Council has adopted *Shop Front Design Guidelines* (2013) as a supplementary planning document, which apply to restaurants within the borough. The proposal does not accord with the guidelines in respect of its proportions, disregard of original features and integration of security measures. Much of the frontage would be replaced by large glass panes, without stallrisers or other traditional shopfront features.
5. Whilst the appearance would be modern, this would be incongruous with the appearance of the remainder of the building, which would retain its more traditional architecture at first floor level. I acknowledge the presence of large

panes of glass from floor to fascia level in other shops nearby; however, these tend to be applied to narrow shopfronts. Even when arranged in a row, these glass frontages are relieved by changes in the shopfronts between different properties. In contrast, the proposed development would be clearly noticeable. For similar reasons, the coverage of the large glazed areas with roller shutters would also appear obtrusive, to the detriment of the overall street scene.

6. Although the appellant suggests that the existing appearance of the building would not reflect its current restaurant use, I cannot see how the proposed development would achieve this aim. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the Council's *Local Plan 2015-2030 Volume One* (2015) Policies CC1 and CC2. These require development to incorporate a standard of design that responds to the context of the area, amongst other considerations.

Accessibility

7. The Council's concern relates to the main entrance doors not being suitably distinguishable within the shopfront. The doors and windows would be similarly glazed, and flush on the same plane, and as such the entrance would not be clear and fully legible within the frontage. Although the appellant suggests that this could be overcome with signage and that there are similar examples in other premises, basic principles of good design require such issues to be remedied at the design stage, and not applied retrospectively.
8. The existing restaurant entrance is clearly noticeable and accessible, and as such the proposal would worsen access into the property. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the accessibility of the site. It would conflict with Local Plan Policy CC2, which requires buildings to be legible and fully accessible to people with disabilities, amongst other considerations. It would also not accord with the Shop Front Design Guidelines, which set out the accessible design expectations of the Council.

Other matters

9. I acknowledge the appellant's point that there would be no change to light or noise levels, but these considerations do not mitigate the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Rollings

INSPECTOR