



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2022

by L Hughes, BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/D/22/3302663

254 Thornton Road, Bradford, BD1 2LB

- 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 Shahzad Malik of New World Furniture against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02440/FUL, dated 4 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is a new shopfront.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new shopfront at 254 Thornton Road, Bradford, BD1 2LB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/02440/FUL, dated 4 May 2021, and plan no. 8759/1.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal is retrospective and the roller shutters have been fully installed, which I viewed both open and closed during my site visit. The Council raises no objection to the aperture alterations, and therefore I have focused my decision solely on the effect of the shutters.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the listed building.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The stretch of Thornton Road incorporating number 254 is straight and relatively wide allowing for long vistas. It has a commercial character while retaining a strong and positive sense of the area's industrial heritage. This results from the building line fronting straight onto the pavement along a long stretch of the road on the same side as No. 254, and the height and range of interesting frontages incorporating attractive cohesive stone brickwork, including the imposing 5 storey 'Try Mills' Grade II listed building opposite.
5. This character merges into a more open and modern setting adjacent to and partly opposite No. 254, occupied by car parking and car sales areas. No. 254 is a virtually symmetrical 2 storey commercial building with an attractive frontage including a tall front gable incorporating a focal point arched centre window at first floor. It is in use as a single floorplate furniture store. The

- development under consideration is the installation of 3 external electric roller shutters covering the newly altered 3 ground floor entrances.
6. Due to the scale and interest of the overall building frontage and its position within the cohesive nature of the street, I find that the shutters do not over-dominate the façade or the wider area due to their small scale.
 7. Furthermore, in the daytime they are normally open and so have very little impact, with no externally mounted shutter boxes or projections above the lintels. When closed they sit within a streetscene of relatively similar shutters on the other conjoined buildings, which is established characteristic within the commercial streetscene. The addition of three further shutters does not dominate the overall appearance or draw significant attention in the vista.
 8. The intent of the Bradford 'Shopkeeper's Guide to Securing their Premises Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD) is explained in its introduction. They key is for shop fronts to remain attractive and welcoming places, especially during evening and night-time hours, which the SPD considers are negatively affected by external solid shutters.
 9. While the proposal does not fully comply with the SPD Design Principles 1 to 3, I find that it does comply with its overall intent. The shutters are slightly perforated across their middle band which in darkness allows views into the interior, and for the internal light to clearly shine through. Even if the windows were left uncovered, the store does not contain specific window display areas to improve the pedestrian experience, which is a key assumption behind the SPD Principles requiring openness.
 10. The street appears well lit by streetlights, and is not a busy town centre high street but a commercial and industrial area with lower activity to be expected outside of opening hours. I therefore do not agree that the effect of the shutters may create an unwelcoming effect and cause a perception of an unsafe environment. While the Council would prefer internal lattice roller shutters, I find that the current arrangement is not harmful.
 11. I also have a statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to consider the impact of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of listed buildings and their setting. I note that the Council considers that the setting of Try Mills is not impacted due to the scale of the development.
 12. The significance of Try Mills to the streetscene results from its height and clear industrial heritage use, dominating this stretch of the road, and helping to create a pleasing corridor effect of cohesive industrial buildings. The appeal site therefore makes some contribution to this setting. For the reasons outlined above and including particularly the small-scale nature of the roller shutters compared to the size of Try Mills, I find that they have a neutral effect on its setting. No harm is therefore caused in this regard.
 13. In conclusion therefore, the development does not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. This is in accordance with the Bradford Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2017) Policy DS1, and the guidance in the Shopkeeper's Guide to Securing their Premises SPD, which together aim for proposals to achieve good design and high quality places.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude the development accords with the development plan taken as a whole, and therefore that the appeal should be allowed

L Hughes

INSPECTOR