



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/Z/22/3309944

20-30 Kirkgate House, Kirkgate, Shipley, Bradford BD18 3QN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mohammed Ali against City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03006/FUL, is dated 6 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is externally mounted security shutters to 4No units as indicated with graphic to front face to mimic shopfront
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I saw at my site visit that three of the security shutters have been installed which appear to accord with the details shown on the submitted plans. However, one set of shutters are yet to be installed. As such, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a brick built, three storey commercial building known as Kirkgate House, located within Shipley town centre. It forms part of a wider parade of shops, with a broad range of shop fronts in terms of materials, although the majority have large display windows. Other than one nearby shop which had solid security shutters that were drawn down at the time of my site visit, the mainly active street frontages in the area contribute to a generally harmonious character and appearance, characterised by interest and activity.
5. The appeal scheme would result in the addition of external shutters to four of the five shop fronts at Kirkgate House. While I note that the shutters maintain the horizontal emphasis of the fenestration on this elevation and do not dominate the building, and despite the shutters being perforated with small holes, there appearance would give the impression of a solid shutter. As such, there would be limited views through to the shop front, creating a 'dead' rather than an active frontage.

6. Consequently, when the shutters are drawn down there would be no interaction with the street, presenting an unwelcoming façade to passing pedestrians and vehicles on approach to the town centre in this prominent corner location. The unduly obtrusive appearance of the shutters when closed, across the majority of the ground floor frontage, would create a sense of hostility and would not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.
7. External shutter boxes are proposed which project from the shop front. While the boxes are modest in size within the context of the building as a whole, at street level the bulk created by the boxes, projecting from the shopfronts that are themselves protruding from the main elevation, would be a discordant addition. Moreover, the boxes at 28 Kirkgate would wrap around the corner, drawing the eye and standing out incongruously. Given the prominent position of the building, the shutter boxes would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider area.
8. I observed a number of shutters in the area surrounding the appeal site, some with external boxes. However, the context of the examples differs in overall appearance and relationship with the street scene. They are generally not in corner locations and located on flat frontages where there are no other significant projecting elements at street level. As such, they are not directly comparable. The other examples do not, therefore, lead me away from my above findings.
9. It has been suggested that the shutters would have graphics applied to them to mimic a shopfront, which would introduce an element of interest to the façade. However, I do not have any clear details before me on this matter. Moreover, when the shutters are raised the external shutter boxes would remain and continue to detract from the appearance of the appeal site and wider area.
10. While it may be that there is no detailed evidence to indicate that the shutters already in place have created a negative perception of crime, the appeal scheme undermines the intent of the Bradford 'Shopkeeper's Guide to Securing their Premises Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD) (2012). This seeks to ensure commercial areas remain attractive and welcoming places, especially during evening and night-time hours, which the SPD considers are negatively affected by external solid shutters.
11. Accordingly, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property, in conflict with policies DS1, DS3 and DS5 of the Local Plan for the Bradford District Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2017). These policies, amongst other things, seek good design, attractive streetscapes, and shop front design that is consistent with the character, quality and materials of the existing façade, building and street scene.
12. The proposal is also contrary to the SPD, which provides guidance on how to provide effective security in ways that will not adversely affect the appearance of a building or the wider area.

Conclusion

13. My above findings bring the proposal into conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to have sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR