



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2023

by L Reid BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/23/3315588

Unit 2 Ten Degrees, 100A George Street, Croydon CR0 1GP

- 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 Ashiq Lalani, AM Coffee (Retail) Ltd, against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 22/00593/FUL, dated 14 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the installation of signage associated to coffee shop use and the replacement of external glazing with louvres.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the planning application form. Although it is different from that on the decision notice, no confirmation has been provided that the change to the wording of the description was agreed by both parties.
3. At my site visit I saw that the louvres have been installed. I have however based my decision on the submitted proposed plans, rather than what has actually been implemented. The Council has provided evidence that demonstrates that the signage works did not form part of the consideration of the application. I have therefore not considered this aspect of the proposal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the architectural character of the building and the character of the street scene.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a high-rise contemporary building which is part of a mixed-use development with commercial units on the ground floor. The building has a modular shape and is characterised by its well-defined vertical pattern created through different cladding, glazing and columns. It stands as a prominent feature and its bespoke and distinctive design positively contributes to the area.
6. The ground floor treatment consists of geometric shapes with lines in the tiles and cladding which break up the proportions of the building. At my site visit, I saw that some of the ground floor units have horizontal louvres incorporated. However, these are generally limited to the upper level above the glazing

- panels. As such, the existing horizontal louvres visually define the upper section of the ground floor.
7. I understand that the rationale for the design of the proposed louvres was to match the existing upper frame horizontal louvres. It has been claimed that if the design of the proposed louvres were amended, the overall aesthetic would be incoherent with the original concept of the building. However, no substantive evidence has been put before me to demonstrate this.
 8. Notwithstanding that this style of horizontal louvres may have previously been accepted on the building, the proposal seeks to introduce additional horizontal louvres into a different section of the building. The further horizontality at the lower level would result in the loss of the definition between the lower and upper sections of the ground floor. It would also disrupt the strong vertical rhythm conflicting with the design of the building.
 9. The prominent position of the site means that the building is highly visible from the public realm. Consequently, the proposed louvres would be very noticeable when passing the site. The result would be that the eye would be drawn to this horizontal section, rather than the vertical textures of the building. This would diminish the order in the design of the building causing significant harm to its architectural character and the character of the street scene.
 10. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies D3 and D4 of the London Plan (2021) and Policies DM10 and SP4.1 of the Croydon Local Plan (2018). Taken together, these policies seek to ensure that development includes architectural detailing that results in a high-quality building and contributes positively to the public realm.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to carry sufficient weight to indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Reid

INSPECTOR