



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/W/23/3323245

14 Ashburnham Road, Ham, TW10 7NF

- 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 Manno Chopra against the decision of the Council of London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 23/0661/FUL, dated 13 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 10 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is retention of existing security shutter to shopfront.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Issue

2. At the time of my visit, I saw that the shutter had been installed. I also note that the application has been submitted retrospectively. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a general store licensed for selling alcohol. It is part of a parade of shops on the corner of Ashburnham Road and Ham Street which includes another licensed general store, cafes, a barber's, dry cleaners and a restaurant. There are residential flats above the shops.
5. The development is a dark metal external roller shutter. Policy LP1 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan (2018) (LP) states that external security grilles will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. The Council's Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document (2010) (SPD) further advises that in most cases roller shutters will not be permitted, but where they are unavoidable, they should be located internally behind the shop window.
6. The rationale for the guidance is that solid shutters are unattractive and can create a bleak and hostile environment which can attract antisocial behaviour such as graffiti. Although the appeal premises was open, and therefore the shutter up at the time of my visit, several premises nearby that were closed had no shuttering and one, a café, had internal shutters. In these cases, the shop

fronts were visible, and it was obvious that in contrast to them a rolled down external shutter would have a much more stark and unattractive appearance.

7. I appreciate that because of the long opening hours the shutter would only be down at night. However, the other off license has similarly long opening hours, albeit it closes at 9pm during the week, an hour earlier than the appeal premises. Also, other premises, such as the pizza takeaway, are open until late. At nighttime, when the various businesses are closed, the shutter would appear unattractive, and I note that the Council has turned down similar proposals nearby to prevent the bleak appearance the SPD seeks to avoid.
8. The appellant claims that the shutter is necessary because off licences require extra protection. However, the other off license a few doors down has internal retractable security grills which appear to conform with the guidance in the SPD. There is no evidence to suggest that these are a less effective deterrent against theft or vandalism. To conclude the development is harmful to the appearance of the building and shopping parade and no evidence has been provided of exceptional circumstances that might justify it. The development therefore conflicts with Policy LP1 of the LP, and the SPD.

Conclusion

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

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR