
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/24/3336983

143-145 Wellington Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1JF

- 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 Raj Ram against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 20220299.
 - The development proposed is for the rebuilding of structurally damaged front and side walls with internal alterations and two new shopfronts and change of use of 144 Wellington Street to sui generis hot food takeaway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. At my site visit, I saw that the development has been completed and I note that the application has been submitted retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on character and appearance of the former Wellington Brewery building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises an end terrace property, located on the west side of Wellington Street adjacent to a sunken railway line and street level bridge. Local topography rises moderately in the direction of the bridge, and as such the existing building is in a prominent position relative to the surrounding street scape. It is part of the former Wellington Brewery, which I understand has been separated into different addresses and uses since the brewery closed.
5. The most significant element of the locale is the Edwardian facade at no.146, which immediately abuts the appeal building. Amongst other things, this contains historic features such as a decorative gable with finial, 'Wellington Brewery' name plaque, balustrade and scroll detail, pilasters and keystones above the windows. It makes a positive contribution to the quality of the area in and around the vicinity of the appeal site.
6. The Council has provided a photograph of the front of the appeal site prior to the construction of the existing development. I have also seen the Wellington Street elevation provided as part of the appellant's grounds of appeal and which formed part of an application in 2011. Although unremarkable in

appearance, the facade contained a parapet wall that partly screened the structures behind, and gave it a lightweight presence. The height of the parapet lowered towards the railway line, thus accounting for the rise in land and reducing its dominance when viewed from the public domain. The relationship with no. 146 was such that it had a degree of subservience.

7. Conversely, the completed appeal building is of considerably greater scale and height. The boxy nature is at odds with the lower pitched and flat roofs of the buildings to the rear, and this disharmonious relationship is clearly visible from the bridges over the railway line at Wellington Street and Peacock Street.
8. The increase in bulk results in a frontage that appears dominant in the context of the neighbourhood, and this is exacerbated as there is no compensatory reduction in height to address the rise in land. The design lacks architectural subtlety, presenting a discordant, solid mass not seen elsewhere in the immediate surrounds. The extent of the building substantially reduces any sense of subservience with no.146, and visually competes with the adjacent property.
9. I appreciate that the flank wall of the appeal site is located at the top of the railway land embankment and the growth of vegetation thereon caused significant structural damage. Moreover, that the building is not located within a conservation area and is within a street scene of mixed uses in close proximity to the town centre and public transport modes. I also recognise that there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby residents or the vitality of the area. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm I have identified above.
10. Taken in the round, I am of the view that the proposal is injurious to the character and appearance of the former Wellington Brewery building and the local area. It runs contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 that seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It is also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and it is desirable for new proposals to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above and all other matters advanced, the appeal fails.

C Hall

INSPECTOR