



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2024

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/Z/24/3350900

117 Station Road, Hampton TW12 2AL

- 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 Aman Souni against the decision of Richmond Upon Thames London Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 24/1445/FUL
 - The development proposed is for the replacement of new shop front with new shutter box to be installed.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The new shopfront and external shutter have been installed. Therefore, this is a retrospective proposal, and 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 area, including the Hampton Village Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The property forms part of a small parade of shops to the south of Station Road. It is located within the Hampton Village Conservation Area (HVCA), which the Hampton Village Study (HVS) indicates comprises four distinctive parts, one of which is Station Road. The HVS explains that the village character of the area is dependent upon the provision of local services and that the road is full of interest and activity, with several shop fronts worthy of retention. The appeal property is located on the periphery of the conservation area and is not one of the shopfronts specifically identified to be retained. Nonetheless, it is part of a mixed-use area and the main thoroughfare from the station to the centre of Hampton Village.
5. Policy LP1 (part B) of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, Local Plan July 2018 (Local Plan) advises that the Council will resist the removal of shopfronts of architectural or historic interest, that shopfronts should complement the proportions, character, materials and detailing of the street scene, and that external security grilles will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.
6. Further guidance is provided in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document -Design Guidance for Shopfront Design (SPD) which seeks to raise

the quality of shopfront design in the Borough and provides guidelines for the various elements.

7. The removed shop frontage had a dwarf brick wall, timber framed windows and an inset, central doorway. The door has been relocated, and the whole frontage is formed of full-height glazing. Whilst the appellant indicates that it responds to No.123 adjacent, which does have a blue, metal framed frontage, the other shops in the parade exhibit a more traditional form, proportions and materials. I have not been referred to any specific architectural or historic significance of the shop frontages, although collectively, they form a characterful parade.
8. The roller shutter at the appeal site was lowered at the time of my site visit. Covering the entire glazed shopfront, the solid black metal design creates a physical and visual barrier which is both unsympathetic to the building and its setting. Notably, the other shops in the parade do not have external shutters, and the complete coverage contrasts with the more interactive relationship the other shops have with the pedestrian forecourt with the use of canopies, seating or planting.
9. My attention has been drawn to several examples of external shutters nearby. While these highlight the varied nature of shopfronts in the surrounding area the planning background to these is not before me. Some of the examples are located outside the HVCA, and the appellant's photographs illustrate the sterile environment they can create and, in one instance, the presence of graffiti.
10. I understand the desire for security measures to protect the commercial premises and that the full-height glazing allows for greater views into the shop and space to display goods. However, such requirements are not unique, and this is to be balanced against the aesthetic considerations and the relationship with the public realm. The shopfront design directly conflicts with the approach advocated in policy LP1 and the SPD. There is no evidence which indicates why security benefits could not be achieved through more integrated solutions such as an internal shutter which is the form of security promoted for conservation areas in the SPD.
11. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The shop front is fully visible in the street scene and, along with the rest of the parade, positively contributes to the character of the HVCA. The effect of the loss of a more traditional frontage and, in particular, the addition of the unattractive external shutter and the potentially hostile environment it creates would fail to preserve this. The harm to the HVCA would be localised and would be less than significant. Whilst there are clear benefits to the scheme for the owners of the business, these are primarily private, and any public economic benefits would be limited and would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
12. I, therefore, conclude that the development harms the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area and fails to preserve or enhance the HVCA. The development is, therefore, contrary to the relevant provisions of Local Plan policies LP1 and LP3, which seek to protect the historic environment and require shopfronts to complement the materials and character of the building and street scene. Additionally, no exceptional circumstances have been identified to justify the use of external security grilles.

13. There would also be conflict with the objectives of the Framework to promote high-quality design in development, including shopfronts, and to protect the character and appearance of the historic built environment.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR