



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2025

by **S Poole BA(Hons) DipArch MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G5750/W/25/3368856

334-340 Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 8BS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr M Khan, Sana Display Ltd, against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Newham.
 - The application Ref is 25/00060/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the subdivision of part of the existing showroom to use as separate shop units and the erection of a first floor rear extension for additional warehouse space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's reasons for refusal cite an inordinately large number of development plan policies many of which are of limited or peripheral relevance to the matters before me. This decision therefore refers to the policies that are pertinent to the main issues.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - (i) the effects of the proposal on the vitality and viability of local and town centres;
 - (ii) the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and
 - (iii) whether the proposal would provide adequate waste management facilities.

Reasons

Vitality and Viability

4. The appeal site comprises an urban plot situated close to the junction between Romford Road and Westbury Road. It is occupied by 2 and 4 storey buildings used for a range of commercial uses on the lower levels with residential above a portion of the site facing Westbury Road. The appeal proposal relates to premises that face, and are accessed from, the petrol station to the side of the site facing Romford Road.

5. At the time of my visit the premises that are the subject of this appeal were being used for storage purposes. However, the information before me indicates that the lawful use of this space falls within Use Class E. The appeal premises can therefore be used for a range of commercial uses including retail.
6. The appeal proposal would comprise the subdivision of the ground floor of the premises into 5 “mini shops” together with the erection of a first floor extension to the side of the site. The latter would result in a significant increase in commercial floor space within the site.
7. Policies SP6, SP7, J1 and INF5 of the London Borough of Newham Local Plan (2018) (NLP) direct retail uses to designated town and local centres first. The appeal premises fall outside a designated centre and therefore the extension of the premises to create additional floor space that can be used for retail purposes would be contrary to the aims of the NLP.
8. In the absence of any evidence that the potential effects of the proposal on nearby centres can be mitigated or would not lead to harm I conclude that due to its size and use the proposed first floor extension would have an unacceptable effect on the vitality and viability of local and town centres. The proposal is therefore contrary to the aforementioned policies and Policies SD6 and SD7 of the London Plan (2021) (LP) which take a strong “town centre first” approach to new commercial development and state that London’s varied town centres should be promoted and enhanced by, amongst other matters, ensuring town centres are the primary locations for commercial activity. There is also conflict with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in these respects.

Character and Appearance

9. The appeal premises are set back from Romford Road behind a petrol station that features a substantial canopy and all the common paraphernalia associated with such facilities including a shop unit to one side, car washing facilities and bold signage. The petrol station and neighbouring buildings create a poor setting for the Woodgrange Estate Conservation Area on the opposite side of Romford Road.
10. The proposal would involve alterations to the frontage of the appeal premises at ground floor level together with the erection of a first floor level side extension. The former would be visually inconsequential in the context of the petrol station forecourt and canopy and would potentially provide a more active and welcoming environment than is currently the case.
11. The first floor level addition would replicate the style and height of the host building and, due to its siting a substantial distance from the road, will not be a particularly conspicuous addition to the street scene. I recognise that this addition would not represent a positive improvement to the appeal premises but in this particular case meaningful improvements can only be achieved by a more comprehensive form of development.
12. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It therefore accords with NLP Policies SP1 and SP3 and LP Policy D4. Together, these policies seek to deliver good design that is appropriate to the context of the local area.

Waste Management

13. The appellant has advised that the refuse generated by the site is currently removed by a commercial waste removal company and this service would cater for any additional waste generated by the proposal. However, there are no details before me in respect of the frequency of refuse collections or how and where refuse is currently stored between collections or can be stored in the future. Without this basic information it is not possible to establish whether adequate waste management facilities can be put in place to cater for additional refuse generated by the appeal proposal.
14. For these reasons it must be concluded that the proposal would not provide adequate waste management facilities and consequently it is contrary to the technical criteria set out under NLP Policy SP8 which seek to avoid negative impacts on neighbours, on and off site.

Other Matters

15. Representations have been made by local residents raising a wide range of issues, many of which do not relate to the matters before me for consideration. Those concerns that do relate to the appeal proposal have been taken into account.
16. I recognise that the proposal has the potential to increase employment opportunities and economic activity at the appeal site. These potential economic benefits do not however outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out under the first and third main issues, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

S Poole

INSPECTOR