
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by **Mark Caine BSc (Hons) MTPL MRTPI LSRA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th February 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/J1535/W/25/3376344

Tysea Stores, Tysea Hill, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, Essex RM4 1JP

- 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 Akhlaq Mohammed against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/1885/25.
 - The development proposed is two shopfront awnings.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/J1535/W/25/3376345

Tysea Stores, Tysea Hill, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, Essex RM4 1JP

- 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 Akhlaq Mohammed against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/1985/25.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension to store.
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Appeal C Ref: APP/J1535/W/25/3376346

Tysea Stores, Tysea Hill, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, Essex RM4 1JP

- 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 Akhlaq Mohammed against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/1887/25.
 - The development proposed is a lightweight timber-slat enclosure of shop forecourt with metal access gate.
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Decision

1. Appeals A, B and C are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. There are three appeals relating to the site which raise similar issues. To avoid repetition, I have dealt with the three developments together in one decision letter. Notwithstanding this, each proposal and appeal has been considered individually, and on its own merits.
3. At the time of my site visit I saw that the awnings and timber-slat enclosure had been erected. The submitted plans show the position of the awnings to differ from what is currently on site, as they have been erected at different heights. For the avoidance of doubt, I confirm that my determination of the appeals is based on the drawings submitted with the original applications.
4. The descriptions of the developments proposed in the banner headings above are taken from the Council's decision notices as they are more concise. However, I

have removed references to 'retrospective planning application' as these are superfluous and not acts of development.

Main Issues

5. The main issue in all the appeals is the effect of the developments on the character and appearance of the area. There is also an additional main issue, in respect of Appeal B which is the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, with particular regard to the adequacy of parking arrangements.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeals relate to one half of a pair of pitched roof semi-detached properties that is in commercial operation as a general store and grocers at ground floor level. This building sits behind a forecourt and public parallel parking bays on Tysea Hill, in a predominantly residential area, close to the junction with Oak Hill Road.
7. The appeal site is not in a conservation area or within the setting of any listed buildings. Nonetheless, the dwellings along Tysea Hill have a mixture of hipped and pitched roof forms. They are set back from both sides of this highway and have not been extended outwardly from their front elevation. These properties have a common solidity of appearance as the predominant building materials are brick and render. Gaps in between these buildings, when combined with the low boundary treatments, or open frontages also provide a pleasant and relatively spacious and open character.
8. I am informed that the timber-slat enclosure has been constructed to create an outside seating area, and that customers using this external space are intended to be protected from inclement weather, by the overhanging retractable awnings above. Although the retractable awnings would not project onto the highway, the submitted plans show them to protrude a significant distance from the building's facade and across a large amount of the forecourt area. These would be significant additions to the front of the building, obscuring the shopfront when retracted, to the detriment of the open and generally uncluttered character and appearance of the area.
9. This impact and visual prominence is significantly accentuated by the introduction of the large timber slat enclosure and metal gate to the front of the site. Whilst it is of a smaller size and scale to the main building, it is approximately 3 metres in height and has an uncharacteristic 'cage like' appearance with grey painted finish. The use of these contrasting basic timber and metal materials, when combined with its size, scale and the amount of forecourt space enclosed, has resulted in a dominant, jarring, and unsympathetic feature that is at odds with the materials and the character and appearance of the appeal property and surrounding buildings. It also significantly erodes the spacious qualities of this part of the road.
10. I appreciate that the separation between the vertical timber slats allows some transparency and provides a relatively lightweight structure. However, it also enables views of the associated tables, chairs, customers and other items within it. Visually, this enclosure, and the awnings, whether taken together or on their own, introduce an unacceptably harmful level of visual clutter into the street scene.

11. As the enclosure does not obstruct any public highways it is unclear how this prevents vehicles from blocking the entrance to the site or the building. There is also little before me to substantiate how it provides any tangible security benefits.
12. Turning to the proposed side extension, I recognise that it would be constructed in materials to match those found on the main building, be of single storey height and would not protrude further forward than its front elevation. However, it would have a considerable footprint, running along most of the shared boundary with Birch House, and be positioned only around 1 metre from it. The proposed side extension would also extend outwardly to the rear to such a degree that only a 1 metre gap would be retained between it and the rear boundary. As a result, it would dominate the space between the store building and these boundaries.
13. When combined with its uncharacteristic flat roof design, the unduly large bulky box shaped form and appearance of the proposed side extension would thereby not only have an unsympathetic and unbalanced relationship with the main building but also substantially diminish the sense of spaciousness that the immediate surroundings possess.
14. I therefore find that each respective development (Appeal A, Appeal B and Appeal C) has or would have an unacceptably harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, they do not achieve a high quality of design, contrary to Policy DM9 of the Epping Forrest District Local Plan 2011-2033 Part One, 2023 (Local Plan).

Highway safety

15. No substantive evidence regarding traffic flows, accidents, or on-street car parking levels have been provided by either main party. Furthermore, the existing and proposed parking arrangements are not clearly shown on the submitted plans.
16. The appellant asserts that the parking arrangement would remain unchanged by the proposed side extension. However, from the evidence before me, which includes local residents' photographs and my own site observations, it is apparent that informal off-street parking takes place to the side of the store. Some of this parking, if not all, would be lost to make way for the proposed side extension.
17. At the time of my late morning site visit I noted that vehicles were able to park in the public parallel bays directly in front of the site and on the section of highway in front of Birch House, close to the junction with Oak Hill Road. Whilst only a snapshot in time, I saw that these areas, along with the space to the side of the store had parked vehicles on them. My site observations and own experience confirmed that vehicles manoeuvring into and out of these spaces already disrupts the free flow of traffic, close to the junction with Oak Hill Road. I am also mindful of the representations that have been received from local residents, which suggest that current levels of on-street car parking and congestion causes problems regarding visibility at this junction, and I have no reason to disagree.
18. Therefore, in the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary, I am unable to conclude, with any degree of certainty, that this situation would not be exacerbated if the off-street parking area to the side of the property was lost, particularly at times when loading and unloading of stock takes place. This would further impede the free flow of traffic to the detriment of highway safety. As such, the proposed side extension (Appeal B) would conflict with Local Plan Policy T1.

This seeks, amongst other things, to promote a safe, efficient and convenient transport system which will manage congestion, promote and improve safety, and improve the efficiency of the local highway network.

Other Matters

19. Although the appellant's frustration regarding the Council's communication and handling of the applications is noted, this matter has had no bearing on the outcome of these appeals as I have only had regard to the planning merits of the developments that are before me.
20. In reaching my findings I have also had regard to the appellant's reference to paragraphs 93 and 94 of the National Planning Policy Framework in all of the appeals and note that the Council has found the effects on heritage and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers to be acceptable. Nonetheless, the absence of harm in these respects are neutral factors that do not weigh in favour of any of the proposed developments.
21. In addition, there is nothing before me to substantiate how any of the developments are necessary to enhance the operational efficiency of the business and support its viability.

Conclusion

22. The proposed developments conflict with the development plan and that conflict is not outweighed by other material considerations. For the reasons set out above, Appeal A, Appeal B and Appeal C should therefore be dismissed.

Mark Caine

INSPECTOR