
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2025

by **H Miles BA (hons), MA, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/Z/24/3350951

125 Singlewell Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7QA

- 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 Suhk Khaira against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20240211.
 - The development proposed is installation of a new shop front with roller shutter
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development is taken from the decision notice as this accurately and clearly describes the development for which permission is sought.
3. This development appears to have taken place, nevertheless, for clarity, this decision assesses the proposal on its planning merits.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is part of a parade of shops along Singlewell Road. Their commercial use and character form a visually distinct group of properties within this streetscene. Shopfronts in this parade generally include a centrally located glazed door, with modest windows either side and distinctive tiling to the stallriser. Nos 127 and 129 have roller shutters, albeit this installation on two properties is not an overriding feature of this parade. The frontages generally appear to have been updated from the original shopfronts. Nevertheless, the shared detailing and fenestration to these shopfronts result in an attractive, distinctive appearance and pleasant sense of uniformity to this group.
6. The appeal scheme introduces a shopfront with a glazed double door to one side, a retained door to the flat above on the other side with a large single pane window across the remainder of the frontage with a small stallriser. Roller shutters are also included. There is nothing before me to suggest that the premises has regular opening hours. Consequently, based on the evidence with this appeal, the shutters are likely to be closed for the majority of the time.

7. Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 security measures for shopfronts and commercial premises (amended 2020) provides guidance which requires high standards of shopfront design and seeks to balance security considerations with the need to preserve the amenity of the locality. It sets out that roller shutters are generally unacceptable, unless it is demonstrated that there is a persistent security problem, the property is isolated with no need to maintain a shopfront and shutters should aim to achieve subtle but secure security measures.
8. The removal of the majority of the stallriser and significant reduction of tiling to this frontage, along with the lack of detail to the glazing to this façade results in a loss of the distinctive details of this part of the streetscene, and is harmfully at odds with the appearance of the rest of this parade. Furthermore, the shopfront is wholly obscured when the roller shutter is down. This results in a closed façade which erodes the appearance of vitality to this commercial area and further undermines the contribution that this shopfront made to the important characteristics of this parade.
9. Therefore, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it is contrary to Policy TC9 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (2014) and Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). Together these set criteria to ensure development is visually attractive and conserves and enhances the character of the local environment, amongst other things and require that development should not result in existing shopfronts of traditional design being lost, nor the installation of security shutters. As well as the advice in Section 4.2 of the Design for Gravesham - Design Code (2024), which provides guidance that development must enhance and contribute to local identity.

Other Matters

10. The roller shutters provide security to the front windows and protection for the stock held at this property. However, I am not provided with evidence as to any persistent security problem in this location. Nor that other security measures would not be appropriate. Consequently, this matter does not outweigh the harm to character and appearance identified above.

Conclusion

11. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR