

Section '4' - Applications recommended for REFUSAL or DISAPPROVAL OF DETAILS

Application No : 18/01757/FULL1

Ward:
Copers Cope

Address : 218 High Street Beckenham BR3 1EN

OS Grid Ref: E: 537204 N: 169358

Applicant : Mr Morad Kara

Objections : NO

Description of Development:

Replacement shopfront

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Beckenham Town Centre
Smoke Control SCA 12

Proposal

The application seeks Retrospective consent for a replacement shopfront. The unit already has planning permission to convert from a shop to a restaurant.

Location

The application site is located within the centre section of Beckenham High Street and is a two storey commercial property. The premises lie within the Beckenham Town Centre Conservation Area.

The surrounding area is commercial and residential in character.

Consultations

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and no representations were received.

Consultee comments

Environmental Health: No objection.

Highways: No comments received

APCA: Object. Non-compliance with Policy BE19.

Conservation Officer: The site is the former Ardec menswear shop which has a very elegant timber shopfront with slender timber frames, timber door, glazed leadwork upper panels and a recessed doorway with tile mosaic flooring. It is quite possible that it dates from the 1920a/30s It makes a positive contribution to the

Conservation Area and I object to its replacement as this would cause harm through the removal of a positive contributing feature. The proposed replacement removes the recessed entrance and whilst the details at 1:100 scale are very vague, the frame would appear overly heavy with the addition of wagon wheels which would be gimmicky and out of character with the building and wider area. The proposal to my mind would cause harm to the Conservation Area and under paragraph 134 we would require a public benefit to outweigh that harm. Whilst reuse of the unit is positive I do not believe it to be of sufficient benefit to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area. The proposal is also contrary to the shopfront policy in the UDP as it is poorly designed.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

London Plan

7.4 Local Character

7.6 Architecture

7.8 Heritage Assets and archaeology

Unitary Development Plan

BE1 Design of New Development

BE11 Conservation Areas

BE19 Shopfronts

BE20 Security Shutters

Emerging Plans

According to paragraph 216 of the NPPF decision takers can also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

As set out in paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework, emerging plans gain weight as they move through the plan making process.

The following emerging plans are relevant to this application.

Draft Local Plan

The Council is preparing a Local Plan and commenced a period of consultation on its proposed submission draft of the Local Plan on November 14th 2016 which closed on December 31st 2016 (under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended). It is anticipated that the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State will be in the early part of 2017.

Relevant policies:

Policy 37 General Design of Development
Policy 41 Conservation Areas
Policy 101 Shopfronts and Shutters

Planning History

Under planning application reference: 17/05935/MATAMD a minor material amendment was approved to include a new fire access door at rear of first floor extension and new fire escape stairs to rear.

Under planning application reference: 16/04171 planning permission was granted for first floor rear extension and alterations to existing ground floor extension approved under planning application reference: 15/00166/FULL1.

Under planning application reference: 15/00166 planning permission was granted for a single storey rear extension to provide additional retail storage.

Under planning application reference: 15/02489 planning permission was refused for a change of use from vacant shop unit (Class A1) to restaurant (Class A3). This application was allowed on appeal on 22nd February 2016.

Under reference: 14/04224 planning permission was refused for a two storey rear extension to provide additional retail floorspace at ground floor and a one bedroom flat at first floor level. The reason for refusal was as follows:-

"The proposal by reason of its bulk, excessive rearward projection and two storey height would represent an overdevelopment and if permitted would establish an undesirable pattern for similar piecemeal infilling in the area, resulting in a retrograde lowering of the standards to which the area is at present developed, contrary to Policy H7 and BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan".

"The proposal constitutes a cramped and over-intensive use of the site, resulting in accommodation that fails to meet the minimum space standards for residential accommodation as set out in the Mayors Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance; lacks adequate facilities commensurate with modern living standards, and is thereby contrary to Policy 3.5 of the London Plan, the Council's general requirements for residential development and Policies BE1 and H7 of the Unitary Development Plan".

Conclusions

The main issue in this case is to judge the level of harm that the proposed shopfront would cause to the appearance of the host building and streetscene and whether or not it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area within which the property lies.

Policy BE19 states that when considering applications for shopfronts the Council will require the proposed to be well related to its context (ii) be of a high quality design (iii) period features should be retained where appropriate; (iv) deep or uninterrupted fascia's are avoided; (v) stallrisers are provided; (vi) display windows at first floor level are avoided; and (vii) appropriate provision is made for access by those with mobility impairment.

Paragraph 6.51 of the above policy states that the design of shop fronts has a critical role to play in the creation of attractive and vibrant town centres. They are frequently replaced and altered as tenants change. As the character and appearance of a shopping parade or street is determined by its individual components, it is important that any proposals are viewed in respect of the wider environment as well as the individual unit. It goes on to state that good design can make a positive contribution to urban character. It is vital that designs and materials of shopfronts are sympathetic to the scale and existing features of the host building and its surroundings. In particular the standardisation of shop design is often at odds with the traditional scale of the buildings. The original character and individual qualities of buildings in shopping centres should be preserved. In conservation areas and historic buildings it is particularly important that materials relate to the period, style and character of the buildings.

BE11 states that in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, a proposal for new development, alteration or extension to a building will be expected to respect or complement the layout, scale, form and materials of existing buildings.

The site is located within the Beckenham Town Centre Conservation Area. From a site visit of the property the brick stallriser has already been built. The original shop front included a timber door and frame, glazed leadwork upper panels and a recessed doorway with tile mosaic flooring, with a large display window, and a low stall riser. The overall design and proportions of the existing shopfront were more in keeping with the traditional character of the host building. It is noted that High Street Beckenham encompasses a variety of shop fronts, with traditional and modern designs. These vary in terms of their materiality, glazing pattern and stall riser depth. Examples of these modern shop fronts, with large areas of uninterrupted glazing and low stallrisers include No 108-110 High Street Beckenham. However, many of these examples were however installed prior to the Conservation Area designation in 2015.

A core principle of the NPPF is to "conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations". Indeed the NPPF seeks to promote positive planning, which can shape and direct development. In this case the newly designated Conservation Area will now provide greater control going forward thereby enhancing the area overtime.

The change to the shop front to include an outer wooden timber frame with central display window with a brick wall stallriser with two cart wheels, tightly fixed to the wall are considered to result in an unsympathetic and prominent form of development which fails to comply with Policy BE19. In turn, it fails to respect or complement the character, appearance, proportions and rhythm of the existing building and streetscene in general and would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA, being contrary to Chapters 7 & 12 of the NPPF; Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies BE1, BE11 and BE19 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006).

APCA and the Conservation Officer have also objected to the replacement shopfront with the Conservation Officer stating that the frame would appear overly heavy with the addition of wagon wheels which would be gimmicky and out of character with the building and wider area. The proposal would cause harm to the Conservation Area and under paragraph 134 the Council would require a public benefit to outweigh that harm.

Summary

The design of the replacement shopfront fails to respect or complement the character, appearance, proportions and rhythm of the existing building and streetscene in general and would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, being contrary to Chapters 7 & 12 of the NPPF; Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies BE1, BE11 and BE19 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006).

RECOMMENDATION: APPLICATION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

- 1 The design of the replacement shopfront fails to respect or complement the character, appearance, proportions and rhythm of the existing building and streetscene in general and would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, being contrary to Chapters 7 & 12 of the NPPF; Policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies BE1, BE11 and BE19 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006).**