

Dear Planning Inspector

Objections to planning application 163 Tottenham Lane - HGY/2011/1329

The diversity of shops and businesses available to local people in the Crouch End area is gradually being eroded; and 163 Tottenham Lane is a prime example. By forcing a longstanding car repair service and other businesses to close because of a refusal to accommodate them in the proposed redevelopment we have yet another case where residents have to travel outside of their area to find the services they need. With the knock on effect that other local shops loose business as those customers will no longer be waiting or collecting repaired vehicles or using the other business services.

A change of use will occur to A1 from B2. Yet there is no anchor tenant secured for the change of use to A1.

Crouch End already has several super markets, nail parlours, restaurants and coffee shops etc. There are also plenty of empty retail outlets and properties in the vicinity of this development; plus another new build granted for housing and retail planning permission on the same side of the street. So what is the proposal for 163 Tottenham Lane going to do for the area? What is it going to bring or provide that is not already there? Yet more empty shops/spaces are a detractor to town centres; they raise questions about crime, discourage shoppers and slowly bring an area down.

This new 'development and retail space' excludes the existing small garage services that are a positive contributor to the local micro economy. A service that provides jobs and training for youngsters; the specialised sort where one learns a valuable skill by getting one's hands dirty as opposed to just stacking shelves. Businesses such as this are good neighbours, they breath vitality into an area.

Haringey's Policy EMP6: "Car Repair Workshops, Garages and Car Washes" states "The Council's preferred location for car repair, garages, car washes and other activities of a similar nature is within the Defined Employment Areas." And though the businesses above are not in a 'protected designated defined employment area' - you know that providing they meet new planning criteria they may be considered.

The owner clearly stated at the DMF that Haringey had given advice to the effect that the businesses would not be suitable. Consequently the plans excluded them. However, the Planning Officer was an impartial chair at the DCF and as such was put in a position where he could not respond to the owner's statements. Yet my understanding is that the Planning authority did not provide such advice, and hence the owner's statement is both incorrect and misleading. As to why the owner got it so wrong I can only guess.

The application

I'd like to make the following points about this application:

The new proposed retail space will be on the outskirts of Crouch End's "town centre" thus stretching the 'retail offer'. Yet in times of recession it is important to keep thriving businesses together to avoid empty shops deterring customers whilst attracting antisocial behaviour, fly posting, etc.

The proposed new build will change the area dramatically with its bland, characterless, box and canyon like appearance. There is no attempt to retain or incorporate the art deco influence of the existing building. No attempt to fit in with the existing Crouch End feel. The proposed development is too high, and imposes over the main street. Fairfield Road residents are concerned that being so blatantly overlooked will directly affect their properties. There is no hint of a stepped development to try and accommodate planning policy distances or the neighbour's concerns.

If a re-development has to go ahead it should be in keeping and match the existing buildings - at 4 stories, not 5 stories high. The rear houses need to be dropped as I understand that there are terrain height differences. Whilst this may seem irrelevant, having seen the effect of sloping land in another development in Crouch End, the height of terrain can have a substantially adverse effect on neighbours - in one case by as much as a whole floor in height. That unexpected and unplanned effect is catastrophic for the neighbouring properties who were expecting a development of two floor heights.

There is no appeal mechanism once planning permission has been granted, therefore I am very conscious that any queries about measurements must be checked thoroughly to ensure that they are within policy compliance. A number of concerns have been expressed about the rear Town Houses and the proximity of the development to Fairfield Road's houses. Should the development go ahead the distances need to be rechecked to ensure they actually meet Haringey policies and that there is an 'increase of distance per floor'. Being overlooked by other properties and the consequent loss of daylight are of great concern to the residents of the north facing gardens in Fairfield Road.

The plans seem to ignore any impact they may have on neighbours. For example, I note there is no obscured glass or other form of mitigation for overlooked properties; and there is the prospect of light pollution from balconies, should balcony lights be erected, has not been considered.

Whilst I understand the need for more social housing there appears to be very little in this development, which seems unjust with so many on the housing register needing affordable homes.

Regardless of the type of housing, and assuming the site is developed, any new occupants will need access to our over subscribed schools and local GP's, Dentists, public transport infrastructure, water, electricity, drainage etc.

Whilst this may not be in the Inspectors remit Haringey Planning Polices need to urgently take into account the accumulative impact of developments on our local infrastructure and public realm.

Regards

Cllr Lyn Weber
Independent Councillor for Crouch End