The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by J C Clarke BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 2 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/16/3156511
133 Milne Park East, Croydon CR0 0BF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr S Chandrakumaran against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
- The application Ref 16/01522/P, dated 29 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016.
- The development proposed is Erection of single storey commercial property.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The postcode for the appeal property given on the appeal form differs from that on the application form. In accordance with normal practice my decision uses the details on the application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. The development plan policies referred to in the Council's decision require for example that new development should generally reinforce and respect the existing development pattern and building form where these contribute to local character.

5. The appeal property is prominently located at one end of a parade which is, in the main, 2 storeys in height and built in red brick with a pitched tiled roof. The parade includes commercial units at ground floor level with flats above. Buildings in the surrounding area are mostly 2 storey houses, also with pitched roofs. The parade fronts towards a short service road, traffic island, and the roads of Homestead Way and Milne Park East. A footpath to the side of the property links with Cator Crescent to the rear.

6. Number 133 Milne Park East contains 2 units at ground floor level, numbered 133 and 133a. The proposed development would provide a further commercial unit within a small area next to the gable of number 133a. At the time of my

visit this area was bounded by a mix of corrugated metal sheeting and block walling which was in a poor state of repair.

7. The proposed development would be fairly low lying and would not lead to the loss of any substantive landscaping. However, its flat roofed construction would contrast with the pitched roof of immediately adjacent units and the predominant form of buildings in the area. Whilst it would be of similar width to each of the units at 133 and 133a Milne Park East, it would be much narrower than, and set further back than, other units in the parade. The development would also be a prominent feature when viewed from the front of the property and from along the footpath to its side.

8. Whilst a flat roofed unit exists at the other end of the parade at 145 Milne Park East, the Council officer report indicates that this was approved in 1966, long before current design policies applied. This being the case, the development at number 145 does not set an effective precedent to justify allowing the current appeal, which I have considered on its own merits taking account of the policies which are currently in force. As the frontage of the proposed development would have a different length and alignment to that of number 145, it would also not 'rebalance' the appearance of the parade as a whole.

9. The proposal would result in the removal of the existing unkempt boundary treatments around this part of the appeal property. However, it is not clear that it offers the only means by which these could be tidied up.

10. Having regard to all these points, I consider that the design of the proposed development would be out of keeping and cause harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. As a result its approval would conflict with relevant provisions in Saved Policies UD2 and UD3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (CRUDP) 2006, Policy SP4 of the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2013, Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan and the Framework relating to this matter.

Other Considerations

11. The proposed development would enable business growth to take place at the site and further facilities to be provided for customers and employees. It would also bring a disused area into use. However, whilst these benefits weigh materially in favour of the proposal, they must also be considered in the context of my earlier findings.

12. The proposed development would not materially harm the living conditions of occupiers of nearby dwellings or impinge on the use of the shared pedestrian access to the units at 133 and 133a Milne Park East. However, these points do not reduce the harm that I have identified in relation to my main issue.

Conclusions

13. I have found that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. Whilst it would bring some benefits these would be insufficiently substantial to outweigh this harm. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Jonathan Clarke

INSPECTOR