

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by Roy Merrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 09 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/16/3158512

51 Christian Fields, Norbury, London SW16 3JU

- 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 J Follows against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/00268/P, dated 18 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 04 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is conversion of a garage into a two bedroom dwelling with ground and first floor extensions and new detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on i) the character and appearance of the area and ii) the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is within a linear grid of steeply sloping streets, characterised by large dwellings in spacious plots. The dwellings on Christian Fields and the adjacent parallel street, Gibson's Hill, have deep back gardens resulting in significant separation between the rear of dwellings. Whilst the architecture of buildings is varied, hipped style roofs are a prevalent feature of the area.
 4. The proposed dwelling would be set back from and directly fronting the highway on Covington Way. As such it would not appear as backland development and would generally conform with building frontage widths on the opposite side of the road.
 5. However the dwelling would be located within a tightly confined plot, abutting a service lane on one side and close to a tall boundary fence and replacement garage on the other. Its rear elevation would be very close to the end of the adjacent garden. In addition, compared with other plots in the surrounding area, the dwelling would be simpler and more functional in appearance, incorporating a pitched roof with gable ends. Furthermore the chamfered corner of the dwelling would simply reflect the form of the existing garage
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rather than good design principles and would serve to further emphasise the restricted space of the plot. In combination these attributes would lead to the sense of the proposal being cramped and at odds with the more spacious development pattern and distinctive character of its surroundings.

6. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy 7.4 of the London Plan 2015 (LP); Policy SP4.1 of the Croydon Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013; Saved Policies UD2, UD3, H2 and H5 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 (UDP) and the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as they seek to promote good design and for development to respect the distinctive character of the area.

Living Conditions

7. Whilst very small in comparison to the expansive layout of other gardens in the surrounding area, there is no dispute between the parties that the proposed garden would not breach any minimum space guidelines. The garden would, however, adjoin the north-east elevation of the dwelling. As such it would be subject to overshadowing from the new dwelling for a significant part of the day, particularly during the late afternoon and evening period when occupiers might commonly seek to use this part of the property.
8. It would be reasonable to expect that future occupiers of the dwelling would wish to erect a reasonably substantial garden fence in order to help secure the property. In combination with the limited size and shading of the garden area, this would make the outdoor garden space feel excessively enclosed and gloomy. Accordingly, it would not be an attractive part of the property for future occupiers.
9. I acknowledge that the proposal would include the provision of a separate storage area for cycles and refuse. However, for the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the enjoyment of the external part of the property and therefore to the living conditions of future occupiers. Accordingly it would be in conflict with Policies 7.6 of the LP and UD8 of the UDP which seek to protect residential amenity including the provision of high quality outdoor spaces.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, and having taken into account all other points raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Roy Merrett

INSPECTOR