
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 22 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/16/3166316
28 Buller Road, Thornton Heath CR7 8QU

- 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 Mirza Raza against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/02399/P, dated 10 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2016.
 - The development is described as the retention of side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address and description above are taken from the application form although it is clear from the plans and the Council's decision that the application also included a link between 28 and 30 Buller Road, the front elevation of which extends at the front to two storeys. This development has been carried out. The Council's report states that, although it differs from that which had previously been approved, they do not consider that the rear extension is unacceptable from a design or townscape perspective.

Main Issue

3. Therefore the main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the link and first floor extensions have on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The site occupies a prominent location opposite the junction with Woodville Road. The area is predominantly characterised by short terraces of two storey dwellings although they display variety in their appearance and detailing. There are also isolated examples of detached and semi-detached houses in the vicinity of the appeal site. This results in a varied yet attractive streetscape.
 5. No 30 is an end terrace property, however No 28 has a character and appearance which is distinct from its neighbours as a result of its originally detached configuration. Its roof runs perpendicular to the street including a gable to its front elevation. This is distinct to the roofs of the adjoining terraces which run parallel to the street, albeit that they have small gables atop two storey bay windows. However this difference would not have detracted from the streetscape but rather the detached built form of No 28
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situated between two terraces would have made a positive contribution to the area's character.

6. In contrast, the two storey front wall of the link has the effect of connecting the two buildings together just below eaves level resulting in an incongruous effect by way of joining two buildings of materially different built form and details. This discordant effect is exacerbated by the gable end of No 30 and the roof slope of No 28 being apparent above it. The blank expanse of rendered wall which occupies the front elevation between the bay windows on each property stands out. This contrasts harmfully with the more considered and articulated manner in which the front elevations of other terraced properties nearby adjoin one another, including those illustrated in the appellant's photographs. The result does not reflect the established pattern and grain of development.
7. Although planning permission has previously been granted for a ground floor link between the two buildings, the plans show that this would have been set well back from the two buildings' front elevations avoiding any harmful visual join and leaving a clear separation between the two. A photograph of the buildings prior to alteration supplied by the appellant indicates that at some time there was a timber structure positioned close to their front elevations in this gap. However, this too would have had a very different effect by virtue of its low height and its horizontal overlapping timber appearance and doorway.
8. The development does not represent high quality design and causes considerable harm to the area's character and appearance. The development is consequently contrary to development plan policies¹ and guidance² which require development to be of the highest architectural quality which reinforces and respects the existing development pattern, plot, building frontage widths and proportions of surrounding buildings, amongst other criteria. These accord with national policy³ that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving an area's character.
9. Although the first floor side extension is not set back from the front elevation, the window arrangement and lower roof pitch means that it retains a degree of subservience to the host building. The resulting frontage is slightly set back and clearly detached from the adjoining terrace of houses whose eaves are higher than those of the extension. Therefore, whilst its design does not follow the approach of setting back the Council's guidance usually seeks, in this case a subordinate relationship and avoidance of a 'terracing' effect has been achieved. This element consequently avoids conflict with the above policies.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the link extension harms the character and appearance of the area, contrary to development plan and national policies, and Council guidance. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 2006 saved Policies UD2 and UD3, Croydon Local Plan Strategic Policies, 2013 Policy SP 4.1 and London Plan, 2015 Policies 7.4 and 7.6.

² Residential Extensions and Alterations - Supplementary Planning Document No. 2

³ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 64.