

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 23rd February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/16/3164630

23 Rockmount Road, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 3SZ

- 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 Adrian Crowe against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/04615/HSE, dated 6 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a second floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the host property and whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Harold Road Conservation Area (CA) within which the appeal property is located.

Reasons

3. Rockmount Road is set on a steep hill. It derives most of its character from the attractive Victorian villas on either frontage. These vary in scale and design and are built in the typical London stock brick. Some comparatively modern development, including the appeal dwelling, is interspersed with the old but, largely, this appears as a discordant element contributing negatively to local character. The other modern development seen at the foot of the hill is excluded from the CA.
 4. The detached appeal property is two-storey, brick-built with a gabled front elevation, so that its ridge runs from front to back. A sloping tiled roof at the front covers a projecting bay and porch at ground level, adding some visual interest to what is otherwise a plain elevation. The proportionate, modest scale of the dwelling means that, despite its more modern construction, it stands relatively unobtrusively within its predominantly Victorian visual context, albeit that two pairs of comparatively modern semi-detached dwellings stand immediately uphill.
 5. The appellant intends adding another floor to the dwelling, whilst matching the existing shape of the roof. In my opinion, the outcome would be visually harmful since the property, in view of its increased height, would assume an odd, disproportionate shape that would inevitably catch the eye. The additional
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floor, whose appearance would reflect the blandness of the first floor, would thus prove obtrusive. It would serve to accentuate the comparatively modern nature of the dwelling whilst distracting from the attractiveness of the Victorian buildings from which the CA derives most of its pleasant character.

6. As implied by the appellant, differences in ground levels and in the scale of dwellings in the street means that variations in roof heights between dwellings standing alongside one another are evident. However, this does not justify a development that would prove visually damaging, for the reasons already explained.
7. I conclude that the proposal would represent a poor design having a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the CA. Accordingly, a material conflict arises with those provisions of saved policy UC3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan and policies SP4.12 & 13 of the Croydon Local Plan (Strategic Policies 2013), that, in combination, are directed to safeguard the Borough's conservation areas from inappropriately designed development.

Other matters

8. Other development plan policies are mentioned in the representations, but those to which I have referred are considered the most pertinent in the particular circumstances of this case.
9. Reference is made to the Harold Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan - a recently published Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Appraisal defines the principal qualities that constitute the CA's special character and identifies threats to this character. Reference is also made to another SPD, the Croydon Conservation Area General Guidance SPD, wherein detailed guidance is provided on design issues to those contemplating development. Both documents are material considerations attracting due weight and have been taken into account in my considerations.
10. The views of local residents, the Norwood Society and the North Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel have been taken into account.
11. All other matters raised in the representations have also been taken into account, including the references to the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and to the other recent appeal affecting the property (*APP/L5240/D/16/3158836*), but no matter raised is of such significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR