
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 02 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/16/3163824
74 Croydon Road, Caterham CR3 6QD

- 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 M S Matharu, Blaze Estates Ltd, against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2016/1493, dated 8 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a new-build, 3-person, 2-bedroom self-contained ground floor flat and garden at the rear of 74 Croydon Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the availability of on-street parking and the amenity of future and surrounding occupiers.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns the development of an additional flat in place of the existing undercroft parking area for three cars in a block of 5 flats permitted in around 2004, and located on the edge of Caterham Town Centre. The Council objects to the resultant pressure on parking congestion and loss of amenity for future occupiers and for those in surrounding streets. Core Strategy 2008 (CS) Policy CSP12 and Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014-2029 (LP) Policy DP7 require development to have regard to the Council's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2012 which sets out a minimum parking requirement of 1 space for each 1-bedroom or 2-bedroom flat.
 4. I note that the standards cover a District which is largely rural or suburban, and in this case the town centre, which is well served by shops and local services and Caterham railway station, is only a few hundred metres along Croydon Road. The site is very close to bus routes serving Sutton and Croydon with links to educational facilities and other railway stations, which makes the site a highly accessible location.
 5. Notwithstanding this, the appellant's Technical Note concludes that the proposed development would result in an additional on-street parking demand of 4 spaces, which seems proportionate given the accessibility of the location.
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6. The appellant's parking beat surveys show that overnight, 24 spaces were available within 200m of the site. In addition, many of the areas under daytime parking restrictions, such as single yellow lines, would be able to accommodate parking such that there would be no risk of overnight parking placing unsustainable pressure on the parking in the neighbouring streets. However, while the daytime survey shows 11 spaces available within 200m of the site, it is unclear how many of these were in the bays on Croydon Road which restrict parking to only one hour and no return within 1 hour, between 0830 and 1800 Monday to Saturday.
7. In Farningham Road, where there are fewer restrictions, the survey counted only one free space in the afternoon. This is similar to the availability I saw during my site visit at 1130 on a Tuesday. While I saw spaces available in the restricted bays on Croydon Road, I saw only 1 free space in Farningham Road, where I also noted illegal and inconsiderate parking and residents using cones to keep access to their driveways free. This suggests that the streets within 200m of the site, on Monday to Saturday, would be unable to absorb the additional on-street parking generated by this proposal for periods greater than 1 hour.
8. I appreciate that CS Policy CSP1 promotes development in sustainable locations and that LP Policy DP1 promotes sustainable development. However, LP Policy DP7 requires development to maintain existing off-street parking spaces where necessary and not to result in additional on-street parking where this would cause congestion, or harm to amenity or highway safety. CS Policy CSP18 says that development must not significantly harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties by reason of factors which include traffic and any other adverse effect. I note that manoeuvring in the parking area which includes a bin-store is difficult; however, there is no evidence that the area could not accommodate 3 cars.
9. The Council does not object to the proposal in terms of highway safety or the effect on traffic. I therefore see no conflict with LP Policy DP5 in as much that it requires development not to impede the free flow of traffic or create hazards to traffic and road users. However, the additional parking pressure resulting from the proposed development, and the consequential search for and solution to daytime parking spaces on Mondays to Saturdays, in streets which are already under such high parking stress, would significantly harm the amenities of future and surrounding occupiers. The proposed development would thus be in conflict with LP Policy DP7, with CS Policies CSP12 and CSP18, and with the Council's Parking Standards.

Conclusion

10. Whilst the development would provide a modest benefit of one additional dwelling to local housing supply, this is outweighed by the unacceptable harm it would cause to the amenity of future and surrounding occupiers, which is in clear conflict with the policies of the development plan. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR