
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2017

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/17/3166855

1539 London Road, Norbury, London SW16 4AD

- 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 Ashan Mussa against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/03879/P, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is 1st and 2nd floor extension above existing retail unit (A1) at ground floor to create a 1 bedroom apartment (C3), with separate entrance from street level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on: the character and appearance of the area; and the living conditions of its occupiers, with particular regard to external space provision.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The development would involve the construction of an extension above the ground floor commercial premises at 1539 London Road (No 1539) to provide a flat. The flat would have living space at first floor level and in its roof space. Part of the flat would be contained in a full width, flat roofed, rear dormer.
4. No 1539 and its immediate neighbour Nos 1535/37 are at the southern end of a terrace, with No 1565 being at the other end of the terrace. However, Nos 1535/37 and 1539 are unusual for this terrace in that they are single storey properties, with the rest of the terrace being two storeys in height. Nos 1541 to 1565 date from 1902¹ and their design is typical of their era and those properties exhibit a strong symmetry. Architectural features of the terrace include parapets/pediments springing from a regular eaves line and the bookend turrets at Nos 1541 and 1565. Many of the other properties on London Road have a period vernacular similar to that of Nos 1541 to 1565.
5. The extension's front elevation would be of a contemporary design and its appearance would be in sharp contrast to the architecture of Nos 1541 to 1565.

¹ As recorded on a plaque at No 1557

Of itself there is nothing objectionable with contemporary design, however, such design should be respectful of its surroundings. While No 1539 is of no particular merit it occupies a prominent position. I consider because the appearance of the front elevation would be in such stark contrast with the vernacular of Nos 1541 to 1565 that it would have an awkward and unbalancing relationship with the rest of the terrace. I therefore consider that when extension was seen from London Road it would be an inharmonious addition to the streetscene.

6. I also consider that the rear dormer would be of a poor design, given that it would have a very boxy form, which would completely dominate the rear roof slope.
7. While I am sympathetic to the appellant's wish to renovate the premises, I consider that does not justify a development that would not be respectful of the streetscene. As the painted advertisement on the flank wall of No 1541 could be over painted at any time, its loss, were the extension to be built, is of no particular consequence to the outcome of this appeal.
8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. The development would therefore be in conflict with Policy SP4.1 of the Croydon Local Plan Strategic Policies of 2013 (the CLPSP); saved Policies UD2 and UD3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan of 2006 (the UDP); and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (with consolidated alterations since 2011) of 2015 (the London Plan). That is because the development would not be of a quality that would respect or enhance its surroundings. I also consider that the parts of the National Planning Policy Framework that relate to the consideration of the appearance of new development do not provide support for this scheme.

Living Conditions

9. No objection has been raised to the flat's internal floorspace, however, it would have no external space for its occupiers. Standard 26 of the Mayor of London's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance of 2016 (the SPG) advises that five square metres of external space should be available. While it might be possible to provide a rear terrace, I consider that such a terrace would be unlikely to be of much use, given the level of noise arising from the operation of the adjoining railway line.
10. The extensive Norbury Park is very nearby and because of that it would be readily accessible to the flat's occupiers. I therefore conclude that the absence of on-site outdoor space in this instance would not be harmful to the living conditions for the occupiers of the development. I therefore consider that while there would be no-site outdoor space provision this would not give rise to an unacceptable conflict with Policy 2.6 of the CLPSP, Policy 7.6 of the London Plan and the SPG, because the living conditions for the occupiers of the development would not be significantly harmed.

Other Matters

11. The development would make a very modest contribution to the supply of dwellings for smaller sized households in the area. I recognise that in locational terms that the principle of providing an additional dwelling would be

unobjectionable. That is because the occupiers of the flat would have very good access to local services and public transport facilities. I also accept that the development would have no adverse effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of any of the immediately neighbouring properties. While those matters would be benefits of the development, I consider them to be outweighed by the harm I have identified.

Conclusions

12. While I have found the absence of on-site outdoor space to be unobjectionable, the design of the extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. That harm gives rise to conflict with various parts of the development plan and national policy, which could not be overcome by the imposition of reasonable planning conditions. I therefore conclude that this development would be unsustainable. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR