
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2017

by David Walker MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31st May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/16/3160318
3 Beckenham Road, Beckenham BR3 4ES

- 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 Joseph Samuel Corporation against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/02218/FULL1, dated 6 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of part two/three storey extension to provide 9 self-contained flats (1 x three bed, 6 x two bed and 2 x one bed).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The proposal would extend the three storey appeal property with two additional storeys to form nine apartments. It is an evolution of a recently approved scheme for eight apartments in a development extending to four storeys. While the approved scheme would reflect the materials, forms and fenestration of the host building, the proposal would add a fifth floor in contrasting glazed panels with a sweeping arc roof profile to the front and rear elevations.
 4. Although the appeal property falls outside of the Beckenham High Street Conservation Area, it is adjacent. At this position it is also clearly seen as part of the grouping of commercial and community buildings that surround the War Memorial roundabout. From the conservation area assessment report provided it is apparent that the listed War Memorial and art deco Odeon Cinema buildings in the vicinity form a valued part of the impressive entrance to the town centre. I have no reason to disagree.
 5. There is evidently historic significance to the social history of Beckenham in the 20th century design of buildings around the junction of High Street and Croydon Road. Although the setting of a conservation area receives no statutory protection, paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires great weight to be given to a designated heritage asset's conservation. The significance of a heritage asset can, moreover, be harmed by development within its setting.
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6. In views from within the conservation area the fifth storey of the proposal would rise significantly above the height of the frontage buildings along Croydon Road to become part of the streetscene. It would be prominent in important views along High Street where the additional height and extensive glazing would be dominating and appear incongruous.
7. There would be a harmful contrast with the scale, design and materials of the buildings around the junction. Such harm would be to the setting of the conservation area generally and to the backdrop to the War Memorial in particular. There would not be parallels with the example provided further along Croydon Road as that building does not form part of the setting of any identified heritage asset.
8. Although the extent of the harm would be diminished by the fallback in the approved scheme for eight apartments, the specific harm that would arise from the addition of the fifth storey would remain. While nine apartments would make a valuable contribution towards the housing objectives of the London Plan this would not outweigh the harm I have identified to the setting of the conservation area.
9. Therefore, whether or not the Council is able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the adverse impacts of the nine apartments on the setting of the conservation area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the public benefits that would be delivered.
10. I conclude the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As a result it would conflict with Policies BE1 and BE13 of the Bromley Unitary Development Plan 2006 that require development to complement adjacent buildings and preserve or enhance the setting of adjacent conservation areas, amongst other things. The proposal would also conflict with Policies 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan that require high quality design and the significance of the setting of heritage assets to be conserved.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Walker

INSPECTOR