
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June, 2017

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

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

Decision date: 27th June, 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/17/3174553
45 Melfort Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 7RS

- 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 Georgi Ivanov against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref: 16/06003/HSE dated 22 November, 2016 was refused by notice dated 23 January, 2017.
 - The development proposed is formation of a front access lightwell and external metal staircase.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front access lightwell and external metal staircase at 45 Melfort Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 7RS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 16/06003/HSE dated 22 November, 2016 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: MR/06.
 - 3) No development shall commence until details of hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:
 - i) means of enclosure and retaining structures;
 - ii) boundary treatments;
 - iii) hard surfacing materials.The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Melfort Road is a long residential street of houses set in closely spaced pairs and short terraces. No 45 is one of a pair of semi-detached, interwar houses with a canted bay and gable to the front. The appeal proposal is for the
-

creation of an open basement area to the front of the house. It would be entered via an external metal staircase and bounded by metal railings, with a new external door intended to facilitate access to the basement storage area of the house. It would be slightly set back from the front boundary of the site.

4. Houses along the road have small front gardens, which are mainly hard landscaped and most of which retain low boundary walls or hedges separating them from the public realm. Relatively few front garden areas have no boundary treatment with some left open for parking. There are no other front basement areas in the street.
5. The streetscape overall is dominated by the regular rhythm of canted bays, and a clear boundary between public and private realms on the back edge of the pavement, created by walls and hedges. The current treatment of the front garden of the appeal site, which has no boundary treatment and no hard or soft landscaping, is anomalous and detracts from this character. The appellant has indicated he is willing to accept a condition to create and maintain a boundary treatment to the site.
6. Although the proposed basement area is a feature not typical of the area, it would be screened by such a boundary treatment and would not be noticeable in the street scene. A wall or hedge would also strengthen the existing clear boundary between public and private space along the street. I conclude that the effect of the proposal on the street scene and on the character and appearance of the area would be limited as a result.
7. The proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, it would not therefore conflict with the provisions of Policy SP4.1 of the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2013, which seeks development which respects and enhances local character and contributes to streetscape, nor with Policies UD2 and UD3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 which seek development which contributes to and builds on existing local character. Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016 require that development should respond positively to local context, including the streetscape, and I do not find that the appeal proposal is in conflict with them.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given above, therefore, and taking into account matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

9. The appellant has suggested a number of conditions, which the Council has had an opportunity to consider, although no comments have been received. I have taken these conditions into account. In the interests of clarity, a condition is applied requiring implementation of the scheme in accordance with the approved drawing. Details of external facing materials, hard landscaping and boundary treatment are also reserved by condition in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR