
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 July 2017

by Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/17/3173221

62 Selhurst New Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 5PU

- 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 Mrs E Melin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 16/06113/FUL, dated 2 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey three bedroom house with accommodation in the roofspace; erection of single storey side extension to existing property, formation of first floor rear roof terrace and provision of associated parking at rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the header above is taken from the Council's decision as this describes the proposal more accurately than the application form.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect on the character and appearance of the area; and the effect of the proposed new dwelling on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings located within a predominantly residential street comprising a mix of flats, terraces and semi-detached buildings. The variety of building types provides a pleasing variation to the rhythm and relative density of different parts of the street. Terraced properties tend to replicate one another within a row and the form, design and spacing of the semi-detached pairs provides a further element of consistency in design and layout. This is notwithstanding that some properties have been extended and altered in the vicinity of the site.
5. The proposed dwelling would infill the space between the appeal property and the adjacent row of terraces, effectively extending the terrace to incorporate the semi-detached pair, Nos 62 and 60. This would necessitate removal of the

single storey porch from the appeal property to allow for the new building. However, even after demolition of the porch the space available would be narrower than the width of both the existing terraced dwellings and the appeal property. As a result, the proposed dwelling would appear squeezed into the site, failing to maintain the rhythm of the terrace and the space between semi-detached properties that is typical of the street. Whilst there are a variety of building widths in the wider area, the proposed dwelling would be seen in the context of its immediate neighbours and the presence of narrow frontages elsewhere does not alter or justify the harm that I have identified.

6. The contrived appearance of the development would be emphasised by the need to replace the front door to No 62 very close to its protruding bay window, leading to an uncomfortable visual arrangement. In addition, the large box dormer to the rear and wide horizontally emphasised windows would not reflect the proportions of surrounding buildings, appearing incongruous. This is notwithstanding that public views of the rear elevation would be more limited, though likely to increase following the removal of vegetation at the rear of the site to create the proposed parking area.
7. Whilst the planning system should not stifle innovative design or seek to impose particular architectural preferences, it is proper to ensure that development reflects the character of the area and maintains local distinctiveness. The development would harm the character and appearance of the area for the reasons I have set out. As such, the proposal is in conflict with Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan (2015) which require high quality design and architecture that has regard to the pattern and grain of existing spaces and streets; Policies SP4.1 and SP4.2 of the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies (2013) which require development to reflect local character and distinctiveness; and Policies UD2 and UD3 of the Croydon Plan (2006) which have similar objectives, specifically seeking to respect existing development patterns, plot and building widths and proportions.

Living conditions

8. The first floor of the proposed dwelling would extend significantly beyond the rear wall containing the window to bedroom 2 of No 62. This would result in a very narrow and enclosed outlook between the new dwelling and the existing outrigger to No 62 from the only window serving the bedroom, causing an oppressive and visually dominating impact on future occupants to the detriment of their living conditions.
9. The appellant suggests that a similar relationship could be achieved by extensions allowed as permitted development. However, no example of such a scheme is before me, nor is there any indication that this is likely to take place if the appeal fails. Similarly, no example was provided of a similar relationship created by the outriggers of existing buildings and I saw none that were directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Therefore, I attach this matter little weight.
10. The proposed building would be located between existing residential properties in a relatively densely developed urban area. In this context, I do not share the Council's concern that the building would appear unsightly or dominating from the long rear garden of No 64. However, this does not alter my conclusion on this matter in other respects.

11. The development would harm the living conditions of the occupants of No 62, as well as any future occupants, noting that No 62 is part of the appeal site. As such, the proposal is in conflict with Policy UD8 of the Croydon Plan, which seeks to protect the amenity of the occupiers of surrounding buildings; as well as the core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
12. The Council also refers to Policy UD2 of the Croydon Plan but I have found no conflict with this policy. Whilst the policies identified by the Council do not specifically refer to the protection of 'outlook', this is a fundamental matter when considering living conditions and I see no reason why it should not be considered as part of any such assessment in the context of the Council's general living conditions policies and the Framework, as I have done above.

Other Matters

13. I note that the development would be an efficient use of land in a sustainable urban location and that it would make a contribution to the Council's housing land supply, albeit a small one. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified with regards to the main issues.

Conclusion

14. The development would harm the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of the occupants' of No 62.
15. In light of the above, and having considered all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

Michael Boniface

INSPECTOR