

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 August 2017

by R J Maile BSc FRICS

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

Decision date: 23 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/17/3177115

2a Hillcroft Avenue, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3DG.

- 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 Edwin Godinho against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application ref: 17/01139/HSE, dated 3 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is: "Demolition of a double garage, portico and conservatory. The application of an external thermal insulation to the ground floor. Alterations to all fenestration. The construction of an integral garage and a first floor dining living kitchen area."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 2a Hillcroft Avenue comprises a detached 1970's bungalow in an area of mixed residential development. It is within the Woodcote Estate Local Area of Special Character ('the LASC'). The dwellings within the Estate vary in style, being set within spacious plots along tree lined roads.
 4. There is no formal Supplementary Planning Guidance to identify the particular characteristics of the LASC. Nevertheless, from the observations made during my site visit and from the photographic evidence produced with the appellant's grounds of appeal the dwellings within the designated area are of conventional appearance and materials, the majority having been erected during the inter-war period.
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5. National policy at Chapter 7 of the Framework¹ emphasises the need to achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development. Paragraph 60 states that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. Nevertheless, that paragraph goes on to say that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.
6. Policy 7.4 of The London Plan seeks high standards of development that should have regard to the form, function and structure of an area and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. Policy 7.6 indicates that design should be appropriate to its context.
7. Policies SP4.1 and SP4.2 of the Local Plan² require development to be of a high quality, which respects and enhances Croydon's varied local character and contributes positively to the environment to ensure that schemes are informed by the distinctive qualities, identity, topography and opportunities of the relevant Places of Croydon.
8. "Saved" Policies UD2 and UD3 of The Croydon Plan³ require development to reinforce and respect existing development patterns, plots and building frontage widths. "Saved" Policy UC5 sets out a presumption against development which would harm the individual character, quality and setting of the Local Areas of Special Character.
9. The proposals incorporate a number of features that enhance the sustainable credentials of the dwelling and the layout is derived from the owner's requirements for a five bedroom house with a room suitable for an ambulant elderly relative.
10. I acknowledge that the scheme is influenced by these factors. Nevertheless, the large first floor extension is of an unusual and contemporary design. Its box-like construction would oversail the ground floor at an angled axis whilst certain of the elevations, comprising photo voltaic panels and large sash windows, create a bland appearance. The new structure would overwhelm the existing modest bungalow and, following removal of the garage, be highly prominent in the street scene.
11. The chosen design would be wholly at odds with the simple appearance of the host dwelling and have a negative impact upon the established character of the designated LASC as described in paragraph 4 above.
12. I therefore find upon the main issue that development as proposed would fail to respect the character and appearance of the host building or to promote or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the Woodcote Estate LASC. As such, the scheme would conflict with national policy at Chapter 7 of the Framework and the Development Plan policies to which I have referred above.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework

² The Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies (adopted April 2013).

³ Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan: The Croydon Plan Written Statement (adopted 13 July 2006).

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR