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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2019

**by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/18/3206781**

**Lord Roberts on the Green, 19 Upper Woodcote Village, Purley, CR8 3HF**

- 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 Laura Goward against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
  - The application Ref 18/00022/FUL, dated 2 January 2018, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2018.
  - The development proposed is the removal of an existing garage and the erection of a timber shed.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the timber shed on the character and appearance of the Webb Estate and Upper Woodcote Village Conservation Area (CA)

### Reasons

3. The removal of the garage and erection of the timber shed has already taken place, such that this proposal is retrospective in nature. The timber shed is a relatively small structure sited within what would appear to be an outdoor seating and eating area in the curtilage of a café known as Lord Roberts on the Green. The café is situated at the south western corner of a large village green in Upper Woodcote Village.
4. Upper Woodcote Village forms part of the CA, and Lord Roberts on the Green is a locally listed building. The village green itself is designated Local Open Land and a Locally Listed Historic Park and Garden. There is a small war memorial sited to the front of the appeal property.
5. The timber shed is sited a few metres to the west of the café building, and it has a front elevation facing the village green. It is constructed from timber boarding with a felt pitched roof. The front elevation contains two windows and full height glazed doors. It is set within a grassed area to the side of the café and there are "picnic-style" seats and benches also within this area. There is a gate with a fenced off path to the rear of the shed, which appears to lead to the rear of a residential property that adjoins the café building. Beyond the path is a driveway that once served the garage, now removed, and a landscaped area. It is not clear if this area is part of the curtilage of the café.

6. The area around the village green has the nature and appearance of a low-density Garden Village. It is primarily residential in character, with the appeal property being the only commercial property in the area. It is not clear whether the timber shed is fully ancillary to the activities of the café or whether it also has other independent uses. There is some evidence that it is also used separately as a “pop-up” shop and small event venue.
7. The Character Appraisal for the CA notes that Upper Woodcote Village is an interesting and well-preserved example of a model village set within the Webb Estate. The Village has a distinctly different feel from the rest of the Estate with its four acre green forming the only piece of open space in the Estate. It goes on to state that extensions in the CA should be designed with care and consideration and relate to the original building. In addition, garages and outbuildings should not protrude in front of the existing main building line. They should be setback and subservient to the existing house, and they should also be well screened. Although the shed would appear to be associated with the café and not the house, nevertheless the same principles should apply.
8. In this case, the use of timber with a felt roof is unsympathetic to the design and materials of other buildings in the vicinity. At the time of my visit, the shed was painted grey with some ornamentation attached, and this does not equate to care and consideration for its surroundings, nor does it relate well to the original building of Lord Roberts on the Green. It would appear that it is sited a little closer to the road than the earlier garage, and closer also to the front of the property, facing the village green to the east. It is, therefore, situated in a prominent position, and it is also not well screened. On this basis, it is harmful to the character and appearance of the CA, and it is also detrimental to the setting of the locally listed building and the nearby war memorial, in conjunction with both of which it is readily viewed.
9. There has been some support expressed for the shed, in that it would appear to be used for certain community functions. I have some sympathy with these sentiments and with the fact that the shed may perform some limited social function for the community. Nevertheless, the harm arising from the proposal would affect the character and appearance of the CA when viewed from the vicinity of the site. Since the harm would be localised, it would be less than substantial to the significance of the CA as a whole, including the setting of the nearby locally listed building. However, any public benefits identified above do not outweigh the harm to the CA resulting from the design and materials used in the construction of the shed and its prominence in the local street scene.
10. The appellant contends that the original garage had to be removed because of its poor condition. I have some sympathy with the situation she found herself in, but it is not reason in itself to construct this timber shed in its stead.
11. In conclusion, I find that the shed would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. On that basis, it would conflict with the provisions of Policy SP4.13 of the Croydon Local Plan (CLP) which indicates that the Council will strengthen the protection of, and promote improvements to, conservation areas. It would also conflict with policies DM18.1/2/4/5/6 and 8 of the CLP which require development, amongst other things, to preserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings, Local Heritage Areas, and War Memorials. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

### **Other Matter**

12. The Council contends that the proposed development would not ensure the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres due to the location being outside a designated town centre, and that it would thereby conflict with Policy DM8 of the CLP. In this respect, it is not clear from the evidence before me exactly what the use of the timber shed is, and therefore whether it could be classified as a town centre use. I share the Council's concern on the issue as a general principle, but in this specific case I have insufficient information to reach a conclusion on the matter.

*J D Westbrook*

INSPECTOR