
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2020

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/20/3245207
10 Downsway, South Croydon CR2 0JA

- 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 Matt Cartwright against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 19/04636/HSE, dated 28 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is for alterations, demolition of conservatory at rear and part demolition of existing two storey and single storey side extension, erection of two storey side extension and single storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Procedural Matter

3. The description of the development has been taken from the decision notice rather than the application form, because it more succinctly describes the development proposed.

Reasons

4. Downsway is a residential avenue characterised by detached and semi-detached houses. Buildings are of similar styles and ages, with brick, render and tile hanging to main elevations, and pitched, tiled roofs. Fenestration generally consists of casement windows with a vertical emphasis, divided into smaller panes by darker glazing bars. Briton Crescent, which joins Downsway opposite the appeal site, displays similar characteristics.
5. 10 Downsway is typical of this character displaying many of the features described above and as such contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. While there have been changes and additions to some of the houses since the area was developed, these have generally been sympathetically applied and the area largely retains its original form and appearance.

6. The Croydon Suburban Design Guide 2018 provides guidance on extending existing dwellings. It advises at paragraph 4.2 that extensions and alterations should seek to respond to the character of a dwelling and the existing appearance of the streets. It notes that respond does not necessarily mean replicate and that the Council will encourage innovative designs that work with the existing character of a building and place. So far as two storey side extensions are concerned, the Design Guide sets out a number of bullet points at paragraph 4.17, including advice that an extension should not result in an overly wide or poorly proportioned elevation facing the street, which can usually be avoided by setting the extension back at least one metre at first floor; and that it does not exceed the eaves and roof ridge line of the existing house.
7. In my view the proposed development would not respond successfully to the character and appearance of the dwelling or wider street scene. The two storey element would not appear subservient to the existing house because of the higher eaves and shallow set back, and the flat roofed design would contrast poorly with the pitched roof design of the main house and those of neighbouring dwellings.
8. I can see from the design statement that considerable thought has gone into the design of a contemporary extension which does not simply seek to replicate a traditional approach, but as noted in paragraph 2.8 of the Design Guide, contemporary reinterpretation should not allow for the poor marrying of architectural styles. In this case, I do not consider that this design works successfully with the character of the existing building or wider place.
9. The design amendments made during the application to set back the front elevation further than originally proposed, and changes to the window design to match more closely existing fenestration reflects advice in the Design Guide. I also note that a similar palette of materials on the existing house would be used for the extension and that the use of a sedum roof would provide an environmental gain which, along with other environmental features, would again be in line with the Design Guide. However, I consider these features would not overcome what in my opinion would appear a discordant element visible in public views from Downsvue and Briton Crescent.
10. It is argued that internal arrangements dictate the set back and height of the side extension. However, it is clear from other extensions in the road, including that at 6 Downsway, that there are other design solutions that do not result in such limitations and therefore I give this argument limited weight.
11. I also note that the development would have a similar or less impact on neighbouring occupiers and may reduce overlooking but the absence of harm to neighbouring amenity does not justify a development that would be unacceptable for the reasons described above.
12. Having regard to the discordant design of the two storey element of the proposed development, I consider it would harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018, Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016 and the Croydon Suburban Design Guide 2018, all of which seek to promote development that respects and enhances local character and contributes positively to the public realm.

Other Matters

13. I note that there are no third party objections to the scheme, but the absence of objection does not necessarily indicate a lack of harm. The appellant also criticises the Council for not providing post submission feedback. That is a matter between the appellant and Council rather than for me, but I do note that pre-application advice was provided.

Conclusion

14. The appeal is dismissed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR