
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/20/3251127

20 Beechwood Road, South Croydon CR2 0AA

- 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 C Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 19/03451/FUL, dated 8 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear/side extensions and convert property into 3 self-contained units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey rear/side extensions and convert property into 3 self-contained units at 20 Beechwood Road, South Croydon CR2 0AA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/03451/FUL, dated 8 May 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant has submitted a revised plan 5089/LO/02A as part of the appeal. The plan does not alter the proposed development from that considered by the Council but includes additional information on the ceiling height of the second floor flat. I do not consider that any party is prejudiced by this additional information and I have taken it into account in coming to my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - The living conditions of future occupants, with respect to internal space standards, private garden space and cycle storage
 - Parking within Beechwood Road.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The Council is concerned that the second floor flat (Unit 3), which is partly enclosed within the roof space of the building, would fail the nationally

described space standard¹ because less than 75% of its floorspace would have a ceiling at least 2.3m in height.

5. An illustrative plan submitted after the Council's decision indicates the amount of floorspace with floor to ceiling heights of 1.5m and 2m. Although the amount of floorspace with a floor to ceiling height of at least 2.3m is not explicitly notated, I am satisfied by deduction from the plan and from my inspection of the accommodation that at least 75% of the useable floorspace meets this requirement. The proposed flat is also larger than the minimum floorspace required by the nationally described space standard. Having regard to these measurements, I am satisfied that the second floor flat would provide enough living space with adequate ceiling height to provide an acceptable level of accommodation.
6. The ground floor flat would be provided with its own private amenity space immediately to the rear, while the first and second floor flats would share a larger area of rear garden accessed by an internal footpath along the side of the property.
7. Policy DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 requires new flats to have private amenity space. Although the garden area allocated to the first and second floor flats is shown to be communal on the submitted plans, it could easily be subdivided to create separate private garden space for each flat. This subdivision could be achieved through imposition of a condition. Such a subdivision would meet the requirements of Policy DM10.
8. The Council is also concerned at the width of the internal footpath allowing access to the rear gardens. The path would also be used to access a cycle store for use by all three flats. Although the Council has measured the footpath to be 0.67m wide, the appellant has indicated that it would be between 0.9-1.16m in width at its narrowest point as it passes alongside the proposed side extension. That is consistent with the submitted large scale plans and elevations. I consider this width to be adequate for the purposes of accessing the rear private garden areas and the shared cycle store.
9. I am satisfied that subject to suitable conditions the proposed development would comply with internal space standards, private garden space and cycle storage requirements and therefore would be in accordance with Policies SP2, DM10, DM29 and DM30 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018, Policy 3.8 of the London Plan 2016, and the Croydon Suburban Design Guide 2019, all of which seek to ensure that new residential accommodation meets acceptable minimum standards.

Parking

10. The public transport accessibility level for the area is classified as poor. It is therefore likely that future occupants will need to use private motor vehicles for at least some of their journeys. One off-street parking space would be retained on the existing drive, but the increase from 1 to 3 residential units is likely to increase car usage and therefore lead to an increase in on-street parking.
11. The appellant has submitted two parking surveys: one for a Sunday morning at 7am, and one for a weekday evening at 7pm. In both cases the surveys

¹ Department of Communities and Local Government: Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, March 2015

showed vacant on-street parking space was available within 200m of the site that could accommodate the needs of the development. The appellant has also drawn attention to a recent permission for conversion of a dwelling to flats at 7B Beechwood Road², which also found there to be adequate on-street parking capacity to accommodate additional demand.

12. The parking surveys do not follow in all respects the methodology recommended by the Council. While that may be so, the surveys were nevertheless carried out at times when I expect the majority of occupants to be at home, and therefore given a reasonable indication of peak on-street parking demand. The Council has provided no evidence to counter the findings of the parking surveys.
13. I noted on my visit that Beechwood Road is a broad residential road allowing parking on both sides without obstructing the free flow of traffic. The majority of houses also have off-street parking on their own private forecourts or in domestic garages. I acknowledge that some representations on the application cite on-street parking as one of the reasons for them objecting to the development. However, from what I saw on my site visit, and having regard to the evidence before me, I am satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate a modest additional demand for on-street parking in Beechwood Road.
14. I conclude that the additional demand for on-street parking arising from the development would not have a detrimental impact on parking in Beechwood Road and would therefore comply with Policies 6.3, 6.9 and 6.13 of the London Plan 2016 and Policies SP8, DM29 and DM30 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018, which seek to promote sustainable transport and reduce congestion.

Other Matters

15. Other concerns raised in representations include the potential for cycling on footpath 144, noise, a restrictive covenant on the height of the fence adjacent to footpath 144, potential disturbance during construction, and pressure on local services. While I note these matters are of concern to one or more local resident, they are not of sufficient weight to alter my decision on the main issues.

Conditions

16. The Council has not suggested any conditions. However, I consider a time limit condition is necessary, and a condition listing the approved plans in the interests of certainty. For the reasons set out above I consider that a condition requiring subdivision of the garden into private areas for each of the flats is necessary in the interests of the living conditions of future occupants and to accord with policy requirements. I also consider that a condition requiring provision of refuse storage, cycle storage and vehicular parking is necessary in the interests of future occupants, sustainable transport and mitigating parking stress. Because the proposal includes extensions, I consider a condition requiring external materials to match those of the existing building to be necessary in the interests of the appearance and character of the area.
17. The Council in its report suggests that a bathroom window inserted in the side wall of the side extension should be obscured glazed. Although this is at ground

² 19/05243/FUL

floor level, due to the slope of the land it may be possible to view over the top of the fence and I therefore consider a condition is necessary to require it to be obscure glazed in the interests of privacy for the neighbouring property. All other side facing windows are existing and I see no reason to require them to be obscure glazed.

Conclusion

18. I conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 plans: 5089/LO/01, 5089/LO/02A.
- 3) Prior to occupation of any of the flats hereby permitted, details of the subdivision of the garden for use as private recreation areas for each of the flats, to include boundary treatments and means of access, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Formation of the approved private recreation areas shall be completed prior to occupation and retained thereafter.
- 4) Prior to occupation of any of the flats hereby permitted, details of refuse storage, cycle storage and the parking area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The facilities shall be provided as approved prior to occupation and retained thereafter free from impediment to their intended uses.
- 5) The external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials that match the external surfaces of the existing building.
- 6) Prior to occupation of the ground floor flat the side facing window in the side extension hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscured glazing, and the obscured glazing shall thereafter be retained. No part of the window that is less than 1.7m above the floor of the room shall be capable of being opened.

***** End of Conditions*****