
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 7 September 2021

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/20/3265773

130 Church Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2NT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Y Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref: 20/03873/FUL, dated 27 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as erection of an additional storey above the existing side extension to the doctors surgery.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of an additional storey above the existing side extension to the doctors surgery at 130 Church Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2NT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 20/03873/FUL, dated 27 August 2020, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following 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 strict accordance with the following approved drawings: CR/01 Existing Lower Ground Floor; CR/02 Existing Ground Floor; CR/03 Existing First Floor ; CR/04 Existing Second Floor; CR/08 Proposed First Floor; CR/09 Proposed Second Floor; CR/10 Existing Rear Floor; CR/11 Existing Front Elevation; CR/13 Proposed Rear Floor; CR/14 Proposed Side Elevation; CR/18 Proposed Lower Ground Floor; CR/19 Proposed Ground Floor; CR/20 Proposed Front Elevation.
 - 3) Prior to above ground works, there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority the following details:
 - a) samples of materials (to include the render colour and texture);
 - b) detailed drawings in plan and section (scale 1:5) through all typical external elements/details of the facades (including all openings in external walls and window types showing the reveals, heads and cills);
 - c) details and locations of any mechanical ventilation systems or other ducts of extracts (where they appear on any external elevations). These should not be positioned on the front elevation or any other prominent location;
 - d) details of any rainwater goods; e) details of the parapet to the top of the extension (including final height and decorative moulding). The details shall be implemented as approved, and retained thereafter.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above and permission is taken from the appeal format and decision notice in the interests of precision.
3. Since the Council's decision, new versions of the London Plan (March 2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (the Framework) have been published. These documents reinforce policy relevant to the main issue in this case. I shall determine the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would a) preserve the significance of the Locally Listed Building 130 Church Road (LLB), b) preserve the setting of the Grade II listed building 'Rockmount' and c) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Church Road Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. The CA is centred around the historic spine of Church Road and various streets leading off it. It is a mainly residential area with a mix of Victorian architecture and some more recent buildings, within an established treescape which adds sylvan character. Church Road is characterised by a mix of grand Victorian suburban villa type buildings and some twentieth century dwellings. A relative grandeur of suburban architectural scale is noticeable in some of the building stock and various open spaces. Separation gaps of various widths between buildings further add to this character.
6. From what I saw during my site visit and the evidence before me, the CA's significance, insofar as it relates to this appeal, lies in the historic townscape which reflects the area's evolution as a suburb during the nineteenth century.
7. The Rockmount listed building is a Victorian villa. Its plot adjoins the appeal site. Its combination of decorative steeply pitched roofs, chimneys, metalwork, brickwork and timber framing have a Gothic Revival character. Given the above, I consider the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the historic legibility of its distinctive Victorian villa architecture.
8. The LLB is a hip roofed Victorian villa, with three storeys plus basement level with a lightwell. On its front elevation, pairs of bays windows rise from basement to first floor level, set around a substantial front porch at the top of steps. With the LLB's rendered finish and transitional location between a row of symmetrical brick villas and the gothic style listed building, the appeal site has a somewhat individualistic character within the evolved streetscene of Church Road.
9. The LLB is in use as a doctors surgery. It has a recent, flat roof side extension at basement and ground floor level with external lift, brick porch and steps down to the basement entrance. There is a discordantly high step up between the top of the recent side extension and the historic core of the LLB. This combination of elements moderately visually fragments and clutters this corner of the building.
10. Notwithstanding this, the LLB has architectural and historic interest that derives from its Victorian villa architecture, with its mainly symmetrical front

facade and sense of individualism. As a neighbouring building with these characteristics, the LLB contributes positively to the setting of the listed building, and the character of the CA.

11. The proposal would increase the mass of the LLB's recent side extension. That said, the roof height of the proposed additional storey would align with the top of the uppermost bay windows, while not extending up to second floor level. This would echo the vertical rhythm of the LLB's bay windows, while retaining a sense of subservience to the charismatic historic core of the LLB. The proposed stucco finish to match the LLB would further help the proposal to harmonise with the LLB.
12. Through these assimilating factors, the proposal would better unify the side extension with the LLB's Victorian core than the existing side extension which, due to the fragmenting factors identified above, draws attention as a modern addition.
13. Furthermore, while the proposal would reduce the volume of the separation gap to the neighbouring listed building at first floor level, the separation gap would remain as existing at ground floor level, and the wider gap between the historic core of the LLB and the side elevation of the listing building would remain at second floor level.
14. Therefore, within the evolved context of the CA, the proposal would go some way to frame views of the front facade of the LLB's Victorian core. It would also retain sufficient architectural 'breathing space' between the LLB and listed building for their architectural charisma, and sense of separation and sylvan context to endure.
15. The proposal would thus modestly enhance appreciation of the historic core of the LLB, have a neutral effect on the setting of the listed building and preserve the rhythm of the CA's townscape.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would preserve the significance of the LLB, preserve the setting of the listed building and preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such, the proposal would accord with Policies DM10 and DM18 of the Croydon Local Plan, Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan and the guidance in the Croydon Suburban Design Guide and Church Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Documents. Together these policies and guidance seek to ensure that development complements local character and conserves the historic environment. Furthermore, the proposal would accord with the approach of the Framework, taking account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, with great weight given to the asset's conservation.

Other Matters

17. Neighbours have expressed concerns about receivable light and privacy at Rockmount, which go beyond the reason for refusal. Given the relatively spacious frontage of the appeal site, the separation space which would remain between the appeal building and neighbouring building, and the set-back and subservience of the proposal to the host building, I anticipate that light levels to the neighbouring property would not harmfully reduce. Also, as part of a doctor's surgery with record rooms, the proposal would not entail residential

accommodation and facing views from habitable rooms towards neighbouring property. The Council considers that the proposal would not harm light levels and privacy of adjoining occupiers and, given the above, I agree on this point. Thus, the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Conditions

18. The conditions suggested by the Council have been considered against the tests of the Framework and advice provided by Planning Practice Guidance. They have been found to be reasonable and necessary in the circumstances of this case. In addition to the standard commencement condition, a condition is necessary requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, to provide certainty. A condition regarding detail and materials is required to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

19. The proposed development would adhere to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal succeeds.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR