



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2022

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10TH June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/21/3288139

16 Southcote Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4RG

- 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 Ms Rhiana Brown against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref: 21/01915/FUL dated 14 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is temporary change of use to a 5 person house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4) on a temporary basis for 5 years.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for temporary change of use to a 5 person house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4) on a temporary basis for 5 years at 16 Southcote Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4RG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 21/01915/FUL dated 14 April 2021 subject to the conditions set out at the end of the decision letter.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the Council's stock of housing suitable for family occupation.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mid terrace, two storey dwelling with accommodation in the roof space, within a predominantly residential area. The plans, as existing, show the house to have 6 bedrooms.
4. The proposal seeks a change of use to a 5 person house in multiple occupation (C4) on a temporary basis for 5 years. The Council advises that the lawful use of the existing house is as a single dwelling under C3 and that an Article 4 Direction was implemented in January 2020 removing permitted development rights from C3 to C4 use. As a result, the Council can seek to control such changes of use, by requiring a planning application to be submitted.
5. The Council has indicated that the proposal would result in the loss of family accommodation for which there is an identified need in the Borough. I agree that there would be a loss of one family unit for up to a five year period. However, apart from the existence of the Article 4 Direction, the Council has

provided no evidence to substantiate the need it has identified for family housing or the current position in terms of such provision.

6. The Council refers to Policy SP2.7 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (Local Plan) which is part of a suite of policies under Policy SP2 entitled Homes seeking to provide a choice of housing for people in socially balanced and inclusive communities in Croydon. Policy SP2.7, which the Council has specifically referenced, sets out the Council will seek to ensure that a choice of homes is available in the borough that will address the borough's need for homes of different sizes, and that this will be achieved by, amongst other things, setting a strategic target for 30% of all new homes up to 2036 to have 3 bedrooms or more. This part of the policy relates to the provision of new dwellings rather than setting a presumption against the loss of existing dwellings and, in the particular circumstances of this case, the proposal before me would not conflict with Policy 2.7 of the Local Plan. Indeed, and as set out above, Policy SP2.7 specifically sets out that the Council will seek to ensure a choice of homes is available to address the Borough's need for homes of different sizes.
7. The Appellant has also referred to the London Plan and to the objectives and policies in that Plan as well as the Croydon Local Plan which see to create mixed and inclusive communities and provide for identified needs. I have also been provided by the Appellant with demographic information taken from the Council's Borough Profile of 2021 indicating a significant proportion of young and single people.
8. The proposal would result in the temporary loss of one unit of family accommodation. However, on the basis of the information before me, there is no evidence to conclude that the proposal would materially affect the Council's stock of housing suitable for family occupation. There would be no conflict with Policy SP2.7 of the Croydon Local Plan in that regard and it would comply with the same policy which seeks to ensure a choice of homes is available to address the Borough's need for homes of different sizes.

Other Considerations

9. There would be very limited external or internal changes required to the property and the Council has raised no other issues in connection with the proposal. From all the information before me, including those raised by local residents, as well as my site visit, I have no reason to take a different view. This includes, amongst other things, in respect of parking pressures and provision of appropriate provision for bike storage and refuse bins as well as the standard of the proposed accommodation. The evidence before me also indicates that there would not be an over concentration of such accommodation in the local area.

Conditions and Conclusion

10. The Council has not specified any conditions it would wish to see imposed in the event of planning permission being granted. I shall impose a condition restricting the change of use to a temporary period of 5 years to accord with the terms of the submitted application. A condition should be imposed to list the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I shall also impose a condition to require the bin store to be available as shown on the submitted plans prior to first occupation and thereafter

retained and maintained and for further details of the bike store to be submitted and approved prior to first occupation; in particular I consider that the bike store should be covered and secure rather than open, to protect the amenities of future residents.

11. I appreciate that the Appellant has not had sight of these conditions prior to their imposition but as they relate directly to the terms of the application or matters already shown on the submitted plans, I do not consider that the Appellant would be prejudiced by the imposition of these conditions.
12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L J Evans

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: A1707 P001; A1707 P002; A1707 P003C; A1707 P004; A1707 P005; A1707 P006C; A1707 P007.
- 3) The bin store shown on Plan A1707 P005 shall be provided before first occupation of the development hereby permitted and thereafter retained and maintained.
- 4) Details of covered and secure bike storage for a minimum of 5 bicycles shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provided in accordance with the approved details, before first occupation of the development hereby permitted. The bike store as provided shall thereafter be retained and maintained.
- 5) The use hereby permitted shall be for a limited period only, being the period of 5 years from the date of this decision after which the use hereby permitted shall be discontinued and the building shall revert to Class C3 use.