

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2022

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2022

Appeal Reference: APP/L5240/W/22/3290936

Land at 26 Coulsdon Court Road, Coulsdon CR5 2LL

- 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 and Mrs Pross against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application (reference 21/02183/FUL, dated 28 April 2021) was refused by notice dated 20 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as the "erection of new detached two storey dwelling with rooms in the roof".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within a residential area of Coulsdon, to the east of the town centre, where development has taken place along the frontages of Coulsdon Road (the B2030). Coulsdon Road runs approximately from north to south and access to houses on the western frontage is generally taken directly from this road.
4. Development to the east of the main road is mainly reached from Coulsdon Court Road, which runs parallel to it, for the most part, though one branch of Coulsdon Court Road carries on to serve 'Coulsdon Manor' a hotel and golf club that is set in extensive grounds. Coulsdon Court Road rises away from its junction with Coulsdon Road, bending to run parallel to it. Thus, the rear elevations of houses in Coulsdon Court Road face Coulsdon Road at a markedly higher level and are largely screened by mature trees and bushes along the highway. Some more modern development has been carried out, nevertheless, which is more obvious in the streetscene.
5. Number 26 Coulsdon Court Road lies at the junction with Coulsdon Road. The house has rendered walls and a tiled roof but is of an unusual design. The

roofs have two different slopes up to ridges at their apex, where one part of the roof effectively constitutes the first floor of the house. It is a large house on a relatively large site. The plot is irregularly shaped, however, and is further constrained by the steep slope where the land falls away to Coulsdon Road. The main private garden area is located alongside Coulsdon Court Road, where it is screened by a dense hedge, and is carefully laid out with a summerhouse and garden equipment, among other things.

6. Between the house and Coulsdon Road is a smaller formal garden space, but the house is, again, well screened by dense planting on, or associated with, the slope leading down to the main road. At the front corner of the site, in the angle where Coulsdon Court Road meets Coulsdon Road, the land is also constrained by the slope of the land and is set with some very large trees at the corner itself. This part of the site contains a brick built garage and some other domestic outbuildings (including a greenhouse) and it provides the access and parking area for the site as well as an area of garden land that is somewhat overgrown.
7. It is now proposed to construct a new two-storey house on this front corner of the site, with its own access, retaining a separate entrance to the front of the existing house.
8. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in July 2021) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, intending that development should add to the overall quality of the area and should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities.
9. Policies in the Development Plan reflect these basic concerns. In particular, Policy D1 of 'The London Plan' (dated March 2021) promotes good design, while Policy D6 focusses on housing design. Similarly, Policy DM10 of the 'Croydon Local Plan 2018' focusses on "design and character".
10. The proposed new house would take up the southern corner of the appeal site, leaving the existing house with a substantial plot and good private garden spaces. The new house has been designed in a more traditional style, of brickwork and tile hung elevations, with pitched roofs and additional accommodation in the roof of what would have the appearance of a two-storey building. The design of the new house would be in keeping with the predominant character in the locality.
11. The new house would be reached from Coulsdon Court Road, sharing the existing access point, and the front part of the new plot, facing the road, would provide a good setting for the front elevation of the new building.
12. At the rear, however, the proposed new house would be located very close to the western boundary of the plot, adjacent to Coulsdon Road. There would, no doubt, be pressure to reduce the existing greenery on this boundary but, even so, the space around the house would be very restricted. The southern corner of the plot would be needed to provide some more private garden space but this, too, would be very cramped.

13. There are significant existing trees in the southern corner of the appeal site and, even though there is also a heavy infestation of ivy, the loss of substantial amounts of vegetation at the junction and on the road frontages would be very detrimental to the appearance of the surroundings, even if the most significant individual trees were to be retained. In addition, the construction of a new two-storey house in this cramped location, close to the public highway on two frontages, would change and erode the pleasant leafy character and appearance of the locality, to a marked degree.
14. In consequence I have formed the opinion that the scheme would be undesirable in planning terms and that it would conflict with the specific policies in the Development Plan that have been identified.
15. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, while the contribution that the appeal scheme would make to economic activity and the additional home that would be created both weigh in favour of the appeal. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the streetscene outweighs the benefits of the project.
16. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR