



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2022

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/22/3299110

165 Limpsfield Road, South Croydon, CR29LJ.

- 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 Miss M. St. Mart and Mr M. Perpetua against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 22/00229/HSE, dated 18 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as '*pavement crossing and use of front garden for parking*'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider that there are two main issues in this case:
 - a) the effect of the proposed crossover on highway safety; and,
 - b) the effect of the crossover and hard surfacing on the character of the streetscape and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, 165 Limpsfield Road, is a mid-terrace dwelling located on the north side of the road. The property currently has off-street parking located to the rear of the dwelling for one vehicle. This is accessed from a drive which also serves the rear of neighbouring dwellings.
4. The site has a PTAL of 1b, and the road is identified by the Council as a busy classified road the B269 with a two-way traffic flow. As I saw there is a school nearby.
5. The appellants propose the formation of a new crossover and the construction of a hardstanding to park vehicles on what is currently the front garden of number 165.
6. As I observed a number of dwellings in the road currently have access to the B269, including some that do not have the facility to turn on site and therefore either reverse from the road or back onto it. Currently, only the end dwellings of this terrace have access from the front of their property to the road.

Highway safety

7. Policy DM30 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (Adopted 27 February 2018) (LP), requires amongst other things, that the movement of pedestrians, cycles, public transport and emergency and services are not impeded by the provision of car parking.
8. I note the appellants assertion that a compact family car, such as a VW Golf, would be able, with a three to five point turn on site be able to manoeuvre in order to enter and exit in a forward gear. However, the appellants have not submitted detailed drawings, in the form of a swept path diagram, to substantiate this claim. Nevertheless, even if this were the case, in my experience it is likely that drivers would be tempted to either enter or exit in reverse gear if this proved simpler and quicker than say a five point turn on site as suggested. Reversing from or back onto the road would impact on the free flow of traffic on this busy road. This would thereby impact on highway safety, contrary to the aims of LP Policy DM30.
9. Further, the application drawings do not show what visibility can be achieved at the crossover. This would be particularly critical given that the crossover would be located close to the common boundary to number 167. Adequate visibility is required for the safety of pedestrians, particularly given the nearby school, and road users alike.
10. I therefore conclude in respect of the first main issue that the proposed vehicular access would for the reasons given prejudice the free flow and safety of pedestrians and traffic using the adjoining highway to the detriment of highway safety. To allow the appeal would therefore be contrary to the aims of LP Policy DM30, Policy T4 of the London Plan (Adopted March 2021), the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the Croydon Council - Suburban Design Guide – Supplementary Planning Document (2019) (SPD) and the advice contained in Croydon Council's guidance - *Vehicle Crossovers*.

Character and appearance

11. As I saw several neighbouring dwellings have laid their front gardens to hard surfacing. However, the greater number have retained, if not all a significant area of soft landscaping. This has resulted in the road generally retaining an attractive verdant appearance.
12. Based on the scheme design drawings before me all the existing garden planting would be removed and the whole front garden would be laid to hardstanding. This would result in significant visual harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. I conclude in respect of the second main issue that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the aims of the LP Policy DM10.8, Policy D4 of the London Plan, the Framework, and the SPD.
14. In reaching my conclusion on this issue I have been mindful that the proposed design could be amended to incorporate some planting. However, without a detailed plan incorporating a swept path diagram the area needed for access, turning and parking is not clear. Accordingly, therefore the space for planting cannot be defined in order that an assessment of any planting can be made on the character and appearance. Accordingly, in the event that I were minded to

allow the appeal I would not be in a position to condition the landscaping with any certainty.

Other Matters

15. I appreciate that there are a number of properties in the road with access to it without the facility to turn on site. I also note the appellants evidence that a comparatively recent development has been allowed without onsite turning. Whatever the background to these cases, given my concerns relating to the impact of the proposal on both highway safety and visual amenity, I am not persuaded that these examples are an appropriate justification for permitting a further crossover and vehicle hardstanding here.

Conclusions

16. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR