



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2022

by A Parkin BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 NOVEMBER 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/21/3286854

205 Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon CR0 6RA

- 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 Mike Bliss of Mike Bliss Architecture against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 21/00443/FUL, dated 18 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Extensions to upper floors to accommodate 4 no. flats'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - Housing provision in the area;
 - The character and appearance of the area;
 - The living conditions of nearby occupiers, with particular regard to outlook;
 - The living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to amenity space;
 - The living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to bicycle storage; and,
 - The living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to refuse/recycling storage.

Reasons

Housing provision

3. The appeal building is a prominent 3-storey corner building located at the junction of Lower Addiscombe Road and Sundridge Road, with Sundridge Place to the rear. At the present time the appeal building comprises a barber's shop at ground floor level, with residential accommodation above.
4. The proposed development would entail the retention of the commercial use at ground floor, with a small reduction in floorspace, together with the creation of three 1-bedroom and one 2-bedroom flats on the upper floors. There would be

- first floor, second floor and roof level extensions at the rear of the appeal property to facilitate the residential development, which would be accessed from Sundridge Road.
5. The Council is seeking to increase the provision of larger family homes in the borough and Policy SP2 (homes) of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (CLP) seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that 30% of all new homes would have three or more bedrooms (SP2.7).
 6. Whilst none of the proposed dwellings would have three or more bedrooms and so the proposed development would not contribute towards this aim, this does not make the proposal unacceptable in terms of Policy SP2.7. Almost 33,000 homes are to be added to the housing stock of the borough between 2016 and 2036, of which around 23,000 could be one or two bed roomed homes.
 7. There is no expectation that 30% of homes on a minor development such as this should have three or more bedrooms, the target is for the whole borough. The proposed development does not, therefore, conflict with this policy.
 8. With regard to the existing residential dwelling, which would be lost as a result of the proposal, the appellant's evidence is unclear. The application form states that there is 97sqm of existing residential floorspace, but also states that the existing use of the site is 'Retail and Office'; the Design and Access Statement (DAS) includes a note that 'the existing house is a 4 bed with internal GIA of 142sqm¹ and that the current uses include residential flats on the upper floors²; whilst the Statement of Case (SoC) states there is a single 2-bedroom flat that is less than 130sqm³.
 9. From the evidence I consider the proposal would result in the loss of a 2-bedroom flat of 97sqm size. The implication of Policy DM1.2 (housing choice for sustainable communities) of the CLP is that the redevelopment of residential accommodation which results in the loss of homes smaller than 130sqm would not be permitted. I note the Council's comments that this seeks to prevent the loss of much needed small family homes.
 10. However, the proposed development would include a 2-bedroom flat for three people that would be less than 130sqm in size. Whilst this proposed dwelling would be smaller than the existing dwelling and slightly smaller than specified in the development plan for a duplex dwelling of this type⁴, it would be capable of housing a small family. The Council does not consider that the floorspace of the proposed 2-bedroom dwelling would be a prohibitive issue in this case, and as such, there would be no net loss of small family homes and so no conflict with Policy DM1.2. Furthermore, with the provision of the additional 1-bedroom dwellings, there would be an increase in overall housing provision in the area.
 11. For these reasons the proposed development would not adversely affect housing provision in the area. It would not, therefore, conflict with Policies DM1.2 and SP2 of the CLP in this regard.

¹ This is on Page 4 of the DAS, next to Policy DM1.2 of the LBC Local Plan (2018)

² Paragraph 3.1 of the DAS

³ Paragraph 8 of the SoC

⁴ Table 3.1 of Policy D6 (housing quality and standards) of the London Plan – the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London 2021

Character and appearance

12. The appeal building is located at the corner of Lower Addiscombe Road and Sundridge Road. It forms the eastern end of a distinctive 3-storey brick terrace containing shop-type uses at ground floor. The appeal building has a chamfered corner topped by a cupola and bounded by gables on either side, the same as at the western end of the terrace. On the opposite side of Sundridge Road to the appeal building and of the same, largely intact, original design, is another terrace of shop-type uses.
13. The appeal building extends along Sundridge Road stepping down from 3-stories to 2-stories to a single storey by Sundridge Place, a narrow alleyway that runs roughly parallel to Lower Addiscombe Road. All of the buildings in the terrace extend towards the rear, to varying extents.
14. The proposed development would entail the creation of habitable space at third floor level adding flush fenestration to the existing roof, including at the front corner by the cupola; extending the roof rearwards along Sundridge Road at slightly reduced heights and including further flush rooflights and a rear balcony; adding a further storey to the 2-storey part of the building and adding a first and part second storey to the rear of the building, whilst replacing the ground floor rear extensions up to Sundridge Place. The extent of the building footprint would be reduced by just over one metre with a narrow landscaped strip at the boundary onto Sundridge Place.
15. The design of the rear of the proposed development has been informed in part by the outlook from the dwellings to the rear of the appeal site, on the northern side of Sundridge Place. The layout of the proposed residential accommodation would also have been an important consideration, whilst some regard to the existing building has been given, in terms of some of the materials and the positioning and design of some of the proposed windows.
16. However, the proposed provision of fenestration at the front corner of the roof would be an obtrusive feature at what is a focal point for the building and the wider terrace. The design of the rear roof extension is visually awkward, lacking in coherence and does not respond well to the existing building.
17. Whilst the existing building has been constructed in distinct phases, and away from Lower Addiscombe Road the side and rear elevations are not visually attractive, their scale and massing are clearly subservient. Whilst the building on the opposite corner of Sundridge Road has had some unsympathetic additions to its rear, these do not detract from the prominence of the corner in the way the proposed development would on the appeal building.
18. The scale and massing of the appeal proposal would be significantly greater than the existing rear extensions and for much of the Sundridge Road elevation would not be noticeably subservient. The third floor level would extend much further than at present before stepping down to Sundridge Place.
19. The different window designs at ground, first, second and third floor levels in the rearmost part of the proposed development would give an untidy appearance to the Sundridge Road elevation. Furthermore, the design of much of the proposed fenestration at ground floor level would not relate well to the rest of the proposed elevation, whilst the scale and design of the proposed

bicycle store access in particular, would be unsightly and incongruous on the proposed building.

20. The proposal would be readily visible in views along Sundridge Road, Sundridge Place, Lower Addiscombe Road and Bingham Road and its design, scale and massing would detract from the character and appearance of the existing building by Lower Addiscombe Road, the terrace of which it is part and the wider streetscene.
21. Whilst the desire to significantly increase housing provision in sustainable and accessible locations will, in part, involve redeveloping existing buildings to increase housing density, this should be done sensitively and in a way that enhances the places that people will live, rather than detracting from them.
22. For these reasons the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. It would, therefore, conflict with Policies D3 (optimising site capacity through the design-led approach) and D4 (delivering good design) of the London Plan, with Policies SP4 (urban design and local character) and DM10 (design and character) of the CLP, and with guidance within the Suburban Design Guide supplementary planning document (SDG) in this regard.

Living conditions of nearby occupiers - outlook

23. There is some disagreement between the Council and the appellant as to the addresses of properties to the rear of the appeal building. From the appellant's description and my observations on site, to the rear of the appeal building on Sundridge Place is a 2-storey building containing two flats, a ground floor flat, 5 Sundridge Place and a first floor flat, 1A Sundridge Road.
24. The outlook from the windows onto Sundridge Place of the ground floor flat is very limited at present. The proposed development would increase the separation distance and introduce planting on Sundridge Place, which would improve the ground floor outlook somewhat.
25. The outlook from the first floor windows is also limited, affording views towards the rear of the terrace containing the appeal building, at the present time. The outlook would be reduced by the rearmost first floor element of the proposed development, which whilst set back a short distance from Sundridge Place, would only be around 4.5 metres away from it.
26. However, I note that one of the first floor rooms has a dual aspect onto Sundridge Road, which would reduce this harm. I also note that the next door properties to the appeal site contain yards and single storey buildings, which would not affect first floor views in this direction. Whilst the outlook from the first floor flat would be reduced, I am not satisfied that this would be sufficient to cause unacceptable harm to the occupier, in what is a compact urban environment.
27. For these reasons the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers, with particular regard to outlook. It would not, therefore, conflict with Policies D3 and D6 (housing quality and standards) of the London Plan, and with Policies SP2 and DM10 of the CLP in this regard.

Living conditions of future occupiers - amenity space

28. Of the four flats proposed only one would have any private amenity space; this 1-bedroom flat would have a rooftop balcony area that would face northwards towards Sundridge Place and beyond. The 2-bedroom flat would have no private amenity space and no communal amenity space or playspace for children would be provided.
29. I accept that with the conversion of an existing building it may not always be possible to include private amenity space for all dwellings, or communal amenity space, without harming the character or appearance of the building or the living conditions of residents.
30. However, the conversion of buildings to residential is commonplace and both Policy D6 of the London Plan and Policy DM10 of the CLP provide strong policy direction for private amenity space for all new dwellings, with Policy DM10 also addressing communal amenity space.
31. I note the presence of the Addiscombe Recreation Ground nearby and I am satisfied that for the proposed development, the scale, function and accessibility of this park would alleviate the need for communal amenity space or playspace for children on site. However, the absence of any private amenity space for three of the four flats would be harmful to the occupiers of those dwellings and the presence of the Addiscombe Recreation Ground would not alleviate this.
32. The appellant has chosen this design approach despite the strong policy direction for private amenity space in the development plan. Given the substantial redevelopment of the rear of the appeal building, I am not satisfied that an alternative arrangement that would better address this issue would not be possible.
33. For these reasons the proposed development would adversely affect the living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to amenity space. It would, therefore, conflict with Policies D6 of the London Plan and DM10 of the CLP in this regard.

Living conditions of future occupiers - bicycle storage

34. A separately accessed bicycle store on Sundridge Road would be provided towards the rear of the proposed development. The proposed bicycle store is said to be able to accommodate the required number of bicycle parking spaces to comply with Policy T5 (cycling) of the London Plan and with Policy DM30 (car and cycle parking in new development) of the CLP. Contrary to the Council's assertion this would be 7 spaces, not 8.
35. The appellant has provided very limited information regarding this storage area, which would be within the footprint of the proposed development. However, from the proposed ground floor plan drawing, capacity for the secure storage of 7 bicycles is shown. Were the development otherwise acceptable a suitably worded condition requiring full details of the storage arrangements for bicycles could be imposed.
36. For these reasons the proposed development would not adversely affect the living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to bicycle storage. It

would, therefore, accord with Policy T5 of the London Plan, and with Policy DM30 of the CLP, in this regard.

Living conditions of future occupiers - refuse/recycling storage

37. A separately accessed refuse/recycling store on Sundridge Road would be provided towards the rear of the proposed development. The appellant has provided very limited information regarding this storage area, which would be within the footprint of the proposed development.
38. The proposed refuse/recycling storage area is said to be large enough to contain the required refuse and recycling bins for the proposed development. However, given the lack of information provided by the appellant and the limited size of the refuse/recycling storage area, I cannot be certain that there is sufficient space to accommodate the bins and additional bulky waste storage space that would be needed by the occupiers of the four proposed flats, and to allow their use in a safe and convenient manner. Consequently, such a matter could not be controlled by a suitably worded condition.
39. For these reasons, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not adversely affect the living conditions of future occupiers, with particular regard to refuse/recycling storage. It would, therefore, conflict with Policy SI7 (reducing waste and supporting the circular economy) of the London Plan, and with Policy DM13 (refuse and recycling) of the CLP, in this regard.

Other Matters

40. The Council refers to the need for a noise assessment to be undertaken and for a S106 Planning Obligation to prevent future occupiers of the proposed development from applying for a car parking permit. I also note the Council's concerns about the refuse/recycling door opening outwards onto the footway of Sundridge Road.
41. If I was allowing the appeal, I would need to consider these matters further. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, no further action is needed in this case.

Conclusion

42. Whilst the proposed development would not adversely affect housing provision in the area or cause significant harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers with regard to outlook, or adversely affect future occupiers with regard to bicycle storage, it would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to amenity space and refuse/recycling storage.
43. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all matters raised, I conclude the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Parkin

INSPECTOR