



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2023

by A Berry MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/22/3299657

275 Addiscombe Road, Croydon CR0 7HY

- 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 Michael Green against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 21/05093/FUL, dated 30 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the redevelopment of the site to provide 9no residential flats and associated parking and refuse facilities.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's first reason for refusal contained within the decision notice references the Suburban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 2019 (SPD). The Council has stated that the SPD has been revoked since the decision was made. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - highway safety;
 - the promotion of alternative means of travel to the private motor vehicle; and
 - surface water flooding.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is located on the northern side of Addiscombe Road, within a residential area that predominantly consists of detached dwellings. The detached dwellings are mixed in their scale but share common features such as hipped roofs, front gables, bay windows and porches, and are constructed largely of brick and render, which results in a coherent appearance. The detailing of these buildings is an important feature of the character and appearance of the street. Whilst there is an adjacent block of flats, these are of

a simpler design that is not generally representative of the surrounding area and does not contribute positively to the overall character and appearance. The dwellings are all set back from the road by front gardens/off-street parking areas and street trees are present along both sides of the road, creating a pleasant and leafy character. The buildings all follow a similar building line.

5. It is proposed to demolish the existing two-storey detached dwelling and construct a detached block of nine apartments. I acknowledge the concern raised by third parties in respect of the loss of the existing building. However, whilst the Council consider the building to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) they have not raised an objection in this regard and has also granted approval for its demolition¹.
6. The proposed building would appear as two-storeys in height with accommodation within the roofspace and a basement for the parking of cars and bicycles. The design of the proposed building does not reflect the architectural detailing of the existing dwelling or the surrounding detached dwellings which provide interest and character to the surrounding area. The reduction in the height of the proposed building and the incorporation of convoluted crown roofs would result in a squat building that would not respect the character or appearance of the surrounding area.
7. The proposed building would extend beyond the front and rear elevations of the existing dwelling to be demolished and beyond the front and rear building lines of the buildings to either side of the appeal site. The properties along the northern side of Addiscombe Road follow a similar building line, therefore projecting forward of it would increase the bulk, prominence and dominance of the building from the street, particularly given the curve of this part of the road and the building's setting adjacent to a relatively small bungalow.
8. In reference to the first main issue, the proposed development would significantly affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policy DM10 and SP4.1 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018, adopted 2018 (CLP) and Policy D3 of The London Plan², adopted 2021 (LP) which, amongst other things, require development to be of a high quality, that respects the development pattern, layout, siting, scale, height, density, appearance, existing materials and built features of the surrounding area.

Highway Safety

9. Access to the basement would be via a proposed ramp sited adjacent to 277 Addiscombe Road. It would utilise an existing dropped kerb onto the road, which is a classified A-road (the A232) and cross a pavement. A mature street tree is located in proximity to the proposed access. The boundary treatment between the appeal site and No 277 comprises a brick wall that exceeds the maximum height of 600mm required to achieve visibility, therefore the submitted drawing indicates that the wall will be reduced in height.
10. 2.4m x 2.4m pedestrian visibility splays have been drawn where the proposed vehicle access meets the pavement. However, these have been drawn incorrectly as they should be positioned either side of the width of the vehicle access. The visibility splays extend over land outside of the appeal site. However, they would cross land that currently forms the driveway to the

¹ Planning Ref: 20/05527/PAD

² The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, March 2021

adjacent dwelling where there is an absence of development. It would therefore appear that a condition could be imposed that requires the imposition of visibility splays.

11. In reference to the second main issue, subject to the imposition of a condition, the proposed development would not adversely affect highway safety. It would therefore comply with Policy DM29 of the CLP and Policy T2 of the LP which, amongst other things, require development to not have a detrimental impact on highway safety for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and private vehicles.

Alternative Means of Travel to the Private Motor Vehicle

12. Policies DM29 and DM30 of the CLP and Policies T2 and T6 of the LP detail a range of criteria designed, amongst other things, to promote travel by non-car modes of transport. These include limiting parking within residential developments to maximum levels.
13. The parking spaces to be provided within the basement of the proposed building would exceed the maximum number of parking spaces for a development of this size. The appellant has suggested that the number of parking spaces could be controlled by condition. Such a condition could ensure that the maximum number of bays are demarcated within the basement, however, the overall size of the basement would not be reduced. I do not have a mechanism before me that would prevent informal parking from taking place within the remainder of the basement and therefore, I cannot be certain that the level of parking would be restricted to the maximum standards. This would fail to meet the development plan's objectives around travel modes.
14. In reference to the third main issue, the proposed development would not promote alternative means of travel to the private motor vehicle. It would therefore conflict with Policies DM29 and DM30 of the CLP and Policies T2 and T6 of the LP which, amongst other things, seek to promote measures to increase the use of public transport, cycling and walking, and restrict car parking in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity.

Surface Water Flooding

15. The appeal site is located within Flood Zone 1, however, the Council state that the appeal site has a 1 in 100-year risk from surface water flooding. This is not disputed by the appellant. Table 8.1 of the CLP states that for developments sited within Flood Zone 1 that are identified at risk from other sources of flooding, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required. No FRA has been submitted and therefore it is not possible to determine whether the proposed development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient or that flood risk would not be increased elsewhere.
16. From the information before me, no details have been submitted in respect of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). The appellant suggests that details could be submitted, approved and implemented by condition. However, the appeal site is at risk from surface water flooding and therefore it is important to understand the ability to provide adequate drainage that would not increase off-site risk prior to determination and therefore a condition would not be appropriate in this instance.

17. Paragraph 8.34 of the supporting text to Policy DM25 of the CLP requires a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) to be included as part of the FRA for any application that involves a basement and where the site is at risk of groundwater. From the evidence before me, the appeal site is not at risk from groundwater and on this basis, a BIA is not required.
18. In reference to the fourth main issue, insufficient information has been submitted to enable an assessment to be made as to whether the proposed development or the surrounding area would be at risk from surface water flooding. It would therefore conflict with Policy DM25 of the CLP and Policy SI13 of the LP which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development should be safe for its lifetime and should incorporate flood resilience and resistant measures into the design, layout and form of buildings to reduce the level of flood risk both on site and elsewhere.

Other Matters

19. I acknowledge that the National Planning Policy Framework outlines that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and can often be built out quickly. I also note that the proposal would provide a net increase of eight dwellings, which would contribute to the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of new homes and could make effective use of land. The proposed development would be located close to public open space and within an accessible location close to shops, facilities and services. I also recognise the appellant's aim for 0% carbon and the inclusion of energy efficiency measures. However, the harm I have identified in respect of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, highway safety, surface water flooding and the promotion of alternative means of travel would outweigh these benefits.
20. The appeal site may not be allocated, nor have any designations other than a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order, which would not be impacted upon by the proposed development; it may not adversely affect the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties or future occupiers, be acceptable in principle, provide a mix of housing that would meet the requirements of the LP, and provide cycle storage. However, these are all neutral matters.

Conclusion

21. I have found no harm in respect of the second main issue and compliance with the development plan, and that a BIA is not required in reference to the fourth reason for refusal. However, this lack of harm would not outweigh the conflict with the development plan in respect of the first, third and fourth reasons for refusal. There are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

A Berry

INSPECTOR