



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2023

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/22/3306895

52, Welcomes Road, Kenley CR8 5HD

- 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 Frank Amin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 21/05931/FUL, dated 10 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing property and erection of 3 detached houses, 6 car parking spaces and private gardens.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Between the application being refused and the appeal coming before me the Council revoked its Supplementary Planning Document 'Suburban Design Guide'. Accordingly, I make no further reference to it in my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on a) the character and appearance of the area, including trees and the landscaping of the site; and b) parking provision, sustainable travel and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. Welcomes Road mainly serves large one and two storey dwellings set within spacious plots. The generous and mature planting within these plots, together with the rising, treed land on either side gives the area a spacious and verdant character. The appeal site itself comprises a single storey detached dwelling set within a large plot and so contributes positively to this established character.
5. However, it is clear from my site visit and from the main parties' submissions that the character of the road is evolving. Blocks of flats and tandem developments are an emerging feature of Welcomes Road. However, it appears that the spacious and verdant character of the area remains largely undiluted.
6. This evolution of Welcomes Road reflects the prevailing policy context provided by the London Plan 2021 (LP) and Croydon Local Plan 2018 (CLP). These encourage the delivery of more houses and the efficient use of land. Whilst such intensification of sites inevitably results in a greater size and scale of built

form, this must be achieved alongside other policy requirements which seek to ensure that new developments are designed such that they respond positively to their local area and so do not harm its character.

7. The appeal proposal involves redeveloping the site for three detached dwellings. The houses would be designed to appear as two storeys from the front but would be more readily identifiable as three storeys from the rear. In order to accommodate the three dwellings, they would have a footprint that would be deep, particularly at ground floor level, but relatively narrow when compared to the prevailing built form in the vicinity. Their plots would similarly be narrow when compared to the more generous plot sizes which contribute to the area's character.
8. The buildings would be 1.2m apart from each other and set 2m and some 2.8m from the boundaries with Nos. 50 and 54 Welcomes Road respectively. The spaces between the proposed houses would not allow for any soft landscaping and the gaps to the site's side boundaries would limit the extent to which mature planting could be accommodated.
9. The proposed access arrangements would increase the amount of hardstanding to the front of the site. Whilst this in itself may not be overly harmful, it would result in a loss of some of the site's green frontage as well as opening up views into the site. Although the submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment indicates only one of the mature trees to the front of the existing dwelling would be lost, this assessment appears to be based on an earlier proposed layout. Furthermore, the vehicle tracking information shows that accessing the parking spaces requires the removal of all the existing mature trees to the front of the dwelling.
10. Three replacement trees are proposed between the two vehicular crossovers, and these could be required by condition. However, it is not clear to me that there would be sufficient space for them to achieve the level of maturity and cover that would reflect the character of the area.
11. As noted above, I am cognisant of the evolving character of the road and that schemes intensifying the use of neighbouring sites have been permitted. However, on this main issue I find that given the scale of the development and its layout, the houses would appear squeezed together on the site with the plots noticeably out of keeping with the general pattern of development. Together with the apparent inability of the layout to ensure suitable tree and landscaping provision, the development would fail to sufficiently reflect the more spacious and verdant characteristics of the streetscene. As a result, it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
12. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies D4 and G7 of the LP and Policies SP4, DM10.1 and DM28 of the CLP which, amongst other things, seek to ensure developments are designed such that they respond positively to their local area, existing trees of value are retained and that the character of an area is protected.

Parking Provision, Sustainable Travel and Highway Safety

13. The LP indicates that in this location a development of this nature should provide 4.5 parking spaces. The CLP echoes the requirements of the LP. Each

dwelling would be provided with two parking spaces and so the development would conflict with these policy requirements.

14. The Transport Statement (TS) submitted in support of the proposal, assessed the parking provision in relation to the Council's parking standards and the current parking demands in the locality. It concludes that the provision of 6 parking spaces would exceed the requirement of the LP but would be considered appropriate for the site's location. This appears to be largely on the basis that although future residents would not require all the parking spaces themselves, the excess provision would accommodate parking for visitors.
15. However, it is not clear to me that all of the excess parking provision is necessarily required to cater for visitors. Furthermore, I have not been directed to any particular aspect of the policies which would allow me to accept an additional quantum of parking for visitors over and above the maximum provision set out in the policies.
16. Given that these policies already factor in a site's location and PTAL rating I do not have sufficient evidence before me to be able to conclude that the provision of 6 car parking spaces would be in line with development plan policies. As a result, I cannot be sure that the overprovision would not have an impact on the use of alternative sustainable transport methods.
17. Welcomes Road has a 20mph speed limit, is not overly wide, has speed cushions and doesn't have a dedicated footpath. As a result, vehicles using the road do not appear to me to be likely to be travelling quickly. The TS summarises the daily traffic from the development as being 11 vehicles per day with around 4 movements expected in the AM peak hour as a worst case. Additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal would not therefore appear to be high.
18. Whilst the Council as Highway Authority seeks to minimise the number of access points from the site, Local Plan policies are more generally focussed on ensuring that new developments safeguard highway safety. There is no indication that the proposed access points would have substandard visibility nor that they would be of insufficient width. Therefore, based on the evidence before me, including my own observations, I have no reason to conclude that the site being served by two access points would be likely to compromise the safety of other road users, including pedestrians.
19. Whilst I find no policy conflict in respect of highway safety, there is an overprovision of parking. Although in numerical terms the additional parking is small and the adverse effect on the use of alternative sustainable transport methods is likely to be correspondingly small, this is not in itself sufficient reason to ignore it. I have considered whether a condition could overcome this adverse finding. However, it seems likely that a revised parking layout would need to avoid prejudicing any of the future occupiers but at the same time cater for visitor parking. The implications of this on the layout of the site are not entirely clear. In such circumstances, were I minded to allow the scheme, it would not be appropriate for a substantive decision to leave such uncertainty to a condition.
20. I therefore find the over provision of parking and consequential implications for sustainable travel unacceptable. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policies T6 and T6.1 of the LP and Policies SP8, DM29 and DM30 of the CLP,

insofar as they require developments to adhere to maximum parking standards and encourage more sustainable forms of transport.

21. However, I am satisfied that there would be no conflict with these policies insofar as they relate to matters of highway or pedestrian safety.

Other Matters

22. Other appeal and application decisions have been referenced in support of the scheme. As such, I have had due regard to these as material considerations. However, I have not been provided with full details of these other schemes but have taken the relevant points made into account. Notwithstanding this, and in any event, each proposal must be assessed and determined on its own individual merits and circumstances, and I can confirm that this is the case with this appeal.
23. The houses would use materials to reflect the local character and it is said that their design is not imposing or intrusive. The proposal would also accord with the Council's strategic target of 30% of new homes having three or more bedrooms. However, none of these matters nor the principle of redeveloping the site were contentious in the appeal. The absence of harm in these respects would therefore be neutral in any balance.
24. I acknowledge that the appellant undertook pre-application discussions with the Council and revised certain aspects of the scheme, in particular reducing the size of the houses so that the front elevations were more clearly read as two storeys and reducing the number of new vehicular access points. However, these changes were not sufficient to overcome the harms that I have identified.

Conclusion

25. There would be some benefits arising from providing two additional dwellings on a site which have adequate access to services. However, these would not outweigh the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area and the effect of the overprovision of parking. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate my decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
26. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR