
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2023

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/23/3317998

14 Dovercourt Avenue, Thornton Heath Croydon, Surrey, CR7 7LG.

- 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 Patricia Giraldo against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref 22/03781/HSE, dated 9 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing side garage and erection of single storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the development on highway safety and local parking stress.

Reasons

3. The appeal site, 14 Dovercourt Avenue comprises an end of terrace dwelling located on a corner plot. The Council state in its evidence that site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 2 which indicates a poor level of accessibility.
4. The appellant proposes the demolition of existing side garage and erection of single storey side extension and single storey rear extension. The Council has identified no harm to the character and appearance of the area, nor has it identified any concerns relating to residential living conditions. From what I have seen and read I have not formed a contrary view on these issues. I shall therefore confine my deliberations to the issue of highway safety and local parking stress.
5. Policies DM29 and DM30 of the Croydon Local Plan (Adopted 27 February 2018) (LP) require that, along with other things, development has a positive impact and is not a detrimental impact on highway safety and seeks to ensure that car parking does not impede the movement of pedestrians, cycles, emergency services etc.
6. As I observed, on the occasion of my visit, the avenue is a narrow one-way crescent and congested due to the large number of parked cars and vans.

While I appreciate that the vans may be associated with current building projects in the area, I imagine that those vans are replaced by residents' vehicles in the evenings or at weekends.

7. The appellant proposes the replacement of the garage with an off-street parking space in front of the house as extended. Any vehicle wishing to park on the forecourt would need to either reverse onto or off the parking bay. Given the corner location of the site, the likely level of on-street parking in the avenue and lack of visibility when reversing across the footpath I consider that this would be detrimental to both highway and pedestrian safety.
8. Furthermore, due to the width of the parking space and the need to maintain access to the house the vehicle doors would open across the footpath. I consider that this would exacerbate harm to pedestrian safety.
9. For these reasons the proposal would be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety.
10. The appellant has suggested that due to its dimensions the existing garage did not meet the requirements for parking. I appreciate from the application drawings that the garage is irregular in shape. Nevertheless, given the scaled drawing provided, while not large, I am not persuaded that it would not provide garaging for one car.
11. I note from the appellant's evidence that when considering a previous application on this site the case officer indicated that the site had a PTAL rating of 4, meaning that it had good access to public transport links. However, the appellant has submitted no compelling evidence to demonstrate that the current PTLA rating is not 2 as set out by the Council, which indicates a poor level of accessibility. In addition, the appellant has provided at appeal details of a parking survey carried out over a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in February. However, amongst other things, no details of the survey's methodology, details of total street parking capacity, street inventory, details of parking demand or the calculation of parking stress has been provided in support of the findings. Accordingly, I can give evidence on these matters very limited weight in my determination.
12. Accordingly, therefore in the absence of a suitable replacement car parking space to compensate for the loss of the garage, coupled with a lack of a detailed parking stress survey to demonstrate that there is adequate car parking capacity in this and surrounding roads, the proposal may well lead to unacceptable impacts on parking stress levels within the vicinity of the site.
13. I therefore conclude in respect of the main issue that the development would be contrary to the aims of LP Policies DM29 and DM30, which amongst other things seeks to ensure highway safety and avoid parking stress.

Conclusions

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

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR