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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2024

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/23/3327704**

**13 Gladeside, Croydon CR0 7RL**

- 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 Chris Lesflores against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
  - The application ref. 23/01623/FUL, dated 25 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2023.
  - The development proposed is for the demolition of the existing detached dwelling and erection of 3 new 4 bed terrace houses with parking, cycle stores and private amenity.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary matter

2. The appellant has provided information, which did not form part of the planning application considered by the Council, to show that the closest room to the appeal site from 11 Gladeside is a kitchen. The Council has indicated in its appeal statement that this clarification sufficiently addresses the second reason for refusal on the decision notice in respect of the living conditions of the occupiers of no.11. I shall therefore determine the appeal on this basis.

## Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
  - the character and appearance of the area; and
  - highway safety.

## Reasons

### *Character and appearance*

4. The appeal site is a detached, two-storey dwelling on Gladeside with off-street parking to the front. Local streets are residential in nature and broadly comprise detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows on relatively wide plots. Although there are exceptions, in the main, the properties are conventionally laid out, set back from the road with front main entrances and reasonably sized rear private gardens. Overall the street scene exhibits a sense of spaciousness.

5. In contrast, the front facades of the proposed dwellings would be considerably narrower than those in the surrounds; the street scene plan demonstrates the tight-knit arrangement of fenestration across the front elevation which would be a clear indicator of this. The proposed units would also occupy plots that are significantly narrower than nearly all other curtilages in the locality. The terrace would have an excessive deep plan form and would span much of the width of the site, substantially eroding the gap to the side boundary with 17 Gladeside. Cumulatively these matters would point towards an over-development of the land, and I am of the view that the proposal would appear cramped and incongruous within the context of the locality.
6. I recognise that the immediate area contains an eclectic mix of housing styles and is not characterised by any one architectural style. I am also aware that redevelopment and intensification of any site would result in smaller plot sizes and the houses would meet or exceed all national space and size standards. However the scheme remains unacceptable for the reasons outlined above. I also saw the terraces at 71-77 Gladeside and 83-87 Woodmere Avenue; these properties have wider plots with their own individual driveways and parking areas. To my mind such examples are not comparable to the appeal proposal and they do not weigh in its favour.
7. The appellant has cited a number of other addresses in the grounds of appeal, nevertheless I have not been provided with the specific circumstances pertaining to these cases. In any event, development at other sites would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
8. Many properties have expansive hard surfaced vehicle parking areas on their frontages, some set back behind boundary treatments and the wide grass verge. In this context, the hard surfacing of the frontage of the proposed dwellings would not be visually harmful, even taking account of the likelihood that additional dwellings would be expected to increase the number of parked vehicles. This however does not outweigh the detriment I have identified previously.
9. The terrace would introduce architectural elements and styles that may not be present elsewhere in the immediate vicinity. I note the Council's comments in this respect, however I am aware that the site is not located in a conservation area and there is no indication that there are any listed buildings nearby. Overall, I have no compelling evidence to suggest that there is a particular local distinctiveness that warrants protection.
10. Bearing this in mind, whilst the approach would appear different to other houses in the area, to my mind this is not in itself a reason to resist the proposal. Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that decisions should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. In the absence of any particular heritage or design constraints, and given the varied size and form of surrounding development, I consider that in design terms alone the scheme would be acceptable.
11. Taken in the round, I am of the view that the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the area. It would run contrary to Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (LP) and Policies D3 and D4 of the London Plan 2021 (LonP), which seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance.

### *Highway safety*

12. The appellant has provided tracking diagrams which, whilst somewhat contrived, demonstrate that access and egress for vehicles can be achieved in a forward gear. In any event I acknowledge the appellant's contention that vehicles currently reverse from driveways at other dwellings on Gladeside, which I was able to observe at my visit. The public highway is relatively quiet in nature where speeds are low; in this context I am satisfied that the parking arrangement would not result in adverse highway conditions locally.
13. The Council states that appropriate pedestrian visibility splays would not be achieved at the site's entrance. I am cognisant that a vehicle emerging from the driveway, with the driver having restricted views of footpath users, is an obvious safety hazard.
14. However, that prospect would be little different to the current accesses to myriad properties in the surrounds. Manoeuvres across the public footpaths into and out of residential accesses are a common feature, although these are approached with caution. Given the infrequency and short duration of such manoeuvres, the low speeds involved and the relatively wide footway to the front I consider that the safety of pedestrians would not be unduly compromised in this particular instance. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any incidents involving vehicles and pedestrians have been recently reported in the neighbourhood.
15. Pedestrian access into the development is shown on the layout plan along the flank border with 15 Gladeside and would appear to be adequate for its purpose. I am satisfied that the bin and cycle stores could be the subject of a condition to ensure that they adhere to the Council's standards for size and layout.
16. As such, I find that the scheme would not result in adverse impacts upon highway safety. It would meet Policies T4 and T6 of the LonP and Policies DM13, DM29 and DM30 of LP, which state that development should not increase road danger and ensure that safety is not compromised.

### **Conclusion**

17. Having regard to the preceding and all other issues, the appeal fails.

*C Hall*

INSPECTOR