



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2024

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/23/3329421

105A Woodcote Grove Road, Coulsdon, Croydon CR5 2AN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Abdul Ibrahim (Weardale Corporation UK Ltd) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 23/00524/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'Demolition of existing dwellinghouse and construction of part three storey building providing 8 flats associated garden space, access, car parking, cycle and refuse storage.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council has indicated that, subject to conditions, its concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on bats and their roosts have been overcome by the additional information presented with this appeal. As such, it is not a matter to which I have had further regard in my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the street scene and wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an existing two storey detached dwelling. Neighbouring buildings are generally detached although there are some semi-detached dwellings opposite the appeal site. Most buildings are two storeys in height, are set back from their site frontages and sit within generous plots. The space between buildings varies but is a further contributory factor to the spacious character of the area.
5. An exception to this prevailing character is the neighbouring property at No.105 Woodcote Grove Road. It has recently been redeveloped to provide a 3 and 4-storey block containing 7 flats and 2 houses. Whilst I understand that this neighbouring building was approved in accordance with the Council's now revoked Suburban Design Guide, it is noticeably at odds with the general character and appearance of the area.
6. The main part of the proposed building would provide four floors of accommodation albeit with the top floor contained within the roof space. A three-storey element would have a slightly lower height. I acknowledge that

the building's maximum height would mirror the highest part of the neighbouring building at No.105.

7. By virtue of its positioning and height, the depth of the proposed building would also be evident from Woodcote Grove Road and from The Horseshoe. This depth, in combination with the height of the building, would result in the south elevation in particular appearing as a somewhat discordant feature. The staggered arrangement would go some way to breaking up this elevation but would not overcome the overall scale of built form or the jarring visual relationship the building would have with the wider street scene.
8. Whilst the building at No.105 offers a similar form of development to what is proposed, it appears as something of an exception within the prevailing environment. As such, I do not consider that it provides a basis for allowing a development that would harm the positive attributes of the street scene and wider character of the area.
9. Overall, the height, bulk and appearance of the proposed building would be at odds with most other buildings in the immediate vicinity and would run counter to the prevailing character and appearance of the street scene and wider area. I therefore find that the proposal would be contrary to Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021. Together these policies seek optimisation of site capacity through good design that respects and enhances local context and character.

Other Matters

10. Given the site layout and position of parking space No.5, it seems to me that users of this space would probably need to reverse out onto the highway when exiting the site. Notwithstanding the 20mph speed limit, Woodcote Grove Road rises towards the appeal site in both directions, and so such a manoeuvre is likely to be a safety hazard.
11. The submitted parking stress survey indicates that there would be sufficient capacity in the vicinity of the site to accommodate the shortfall of spaces if there were only 4, as opposed to 5 spaces on site. I see no reason why a new swept path analysis would be required. Were the layout to be revised to take account of this, it may be possible to provide an alternative option for the refuse storage. However, even if the layout were amended and were found to be acceptable in all respects, this would not overcome the harm to the character and appearance of the area from the proposed building.
12. The fifth reason for refusal relates to the absence of a legal agreement. The Council require this to secure both a financial contribution towards improvements for sustainable transport to mitigate the impacts of the development and for highways works to provide appropriate access.
13. There is policy support for requiring new residential development to contribute towards the provision of certain sustainable transport initiatives. However, the proposal appears to be reusing one of the existing access points. It is therefore not clear the extent to which there would be a need for highways works to be undertaken to provide an appropriate access. Therefore, I am uncertain as to whether the full extent of what is being sought is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms or that it would be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Therefore, on the

information before me I am unable to positively conclude that the tests of the National Planning Policy Framework would be met. Consequently, the absence of a planning obligation is not a determinative factor in this particular decision.

14. The proposal is said to comply with various policy considerations such as the principle of the development, mix of units, effect on neighbours, space standards etc. However, these factors would represent a lack of harm which would accordingly be neutral in any balance.

Conclusion

15. Whilst there are some positive benefits of the scheme, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR

