



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2024

by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3347155

1 Preston Road, Upper Norwood, Croydon, London SE19 3HG

- 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 Ms Kenwe Yekovie against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 23/04651/FUL.
 - The development proposed is change of use from single dwelling to three self-contained flats, including the erection of a dormer extension to the rear and side roof slopes. 2no. x 2 bedroom flats and 1 x studio flat will be created.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the living conditions of the future occupants of the proposed development would be acceptable, with regard to outdoor space and waste facilities; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing dwelling into three self-contained units. Flat 1, located on the ground floor, would have direct and sole access to the existing rear garden. However, no outdoor private space is proposed for Flats 2 and 3, located on the first floor and in the loft space, respectively. This would be detrimental to the living conditions of future occupiers of these flats as they have no direct access to outdoor space for functional activities, such as clothes drying, or for recreation. Whilst physical constraints can impact how existing buildings can be converted, this does not mean that the quality of an occupier's living accommodation should be compromised as a result.
4. Norwood Grove Recreation Ground, Biggin Woods, Norwood Park and Tivoli Park are located within a 10-15 minute walk from the appeal site. These public spaces are not, however, places that support daily living functions nor provide the level of privacy expected within a residential environment. Their proximity to the appeal site does not, therefore, negate the need to meet the minimum standards set out in the aforementioned policies.

5. Bin stores are indicated in two locations on the Ground Floor Plan: in the garden space for Flat 1; and to the side of the property to serve Flats 2 and 3. Although various bins are shown in these stores, they do not meet the number and types set out in the Waste and Recycling Planning Policy Document. Nor has temporary storage space for bulky waste, as required by Policy DM13 of the Local Plan, been identified.
6. Whilst a condition could be imposed requiring such details to be submitted to and approved by the Council, were I to allow this appeal, it has not been demonstrated that there is sufficient space on the appeal site to accommodate the required bin storage space. As a result, future occupiers would have an inadequate amount of space to support the separation and collection of different waste outside their living space. This could result in waste not being collected regularly, take up space inside the Flats or placed elsewhere on the appeal site. These scenarios would be detrimental to the living conditions of future occupiers of the Flats.
7. I conclude that the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed development would not be acceptable, with regard to outdoor space and waste facilities. It would be contrary to Policy D6 of the London Plan and policies DM10 and DM13 of the Croydon Local Plan (the Local Plan) which indicate that developments should meet quality and quantity standards regarding the provision of outdoor amenity space and waste storage provision.

Character and appearance

8. The host property, being located on the corner of Preston Road and Grecian Crescent, has two street frontages. The front elevation onto Preston Road comprises similar vernacular details and features to the dwellings located along the entirety of this side of the road. The narrow dwelling widths, repeated roofscapes, angled double height bays with barge board clad projecting gables and fenestration treatments combine to create a sense of rhythm to the built form in the street scene. This uniformity is further emphasised by the mix of dwelling types, ages, heights and wider building forms present on the opposite side of the road.
9. The dwelling types and forms within the Grecian Crescent street scene are similarly mixed, although short rows of properties of the same character and/or appearance are evident. However, the host property's use of red brickwork contrasts with the white/cream render commonplace throughout the crescent. In addition, its long side elevation along Grecian Crescent, including a double height rectangular bay, highlights the differing character and appearance of the host property to the rest of Preston Road.
10. The proposed development comprises alterations to the roof to create additional living space in the loft. This would include squaring off the existing hipped roofscape to the side of the property and extending into a dormer structure to the rear. Irrespective of its numerical value, the proposed roof extension would be of similar height to the existing ridgeline and would not extend further than the building line of the main side elevation. The horizontal emphasis and use of matching tiles on the rearward/side facing dormer structure ensures it would not dominate the existing roofscape.
11. No alterations are proposed to the double height bays and projecting gables on the side or front elevation. As a result, the bay's prominence in the Grecian

Crescent street scene would be retained and the rhythm in the roofscapes along Preston Road would not be disrupted. Therefore, whilst the hipped roofscape feature would be lost from the property, the proposed development would remain subservient to the host dwelling and its overall character retained. It would not have an incongruous appearance.

12. The installation of two dormer windows facing Grecian Crescent is also proposed in positions that do not align vertically with the existing windows in this elevation. However, aside from the glazing in the bay, the existing fenestration on the side of the property is not aligned across the ground and first floor. Further offset windows would not harm these elements which contribute to the character of the existing building. In addition, the proposed dormers reflect the proportions, surround detail, number of panes per window and barge board clad gable projections elsewhere on the property.
13. I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy D3 of the London Plan and policies SP4 and DM10 of the Local Plan. In combination, these policies require development to positively respond to the local distinctiveness, character and design features of a host property and its surroundings.

Other Matters

14. The proposed development would provide socio and economic benefits from the provision of new homes, in support of the National Planning Policy Framework's objective of boosting the supply of homes. It would also assist in optimising the delivery of housing within areas with good access to public transport, as promoted by Policy H2 of the London Plan. However, given the proposed development's scale, any boost resulting from the net gain of two dwellings would be minor. Moreover, the evidence before me indicates that the Council are able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Similarly, the environmental benefits derived from the solar panels, use of locally sourced renewable materials, energy efficient doors and windows and the use of sustainable drainage would be small in scale.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. Whilst I have concluded that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area, the lack of private outdoor space for Flats 2 and 3, and adequate space for waste and recycling for all Flats would be detrimental to the living conditions of future occupiers. I attach substantial weight to the harm this would cause. Although some benefits would be derived from the proposed development, these would be of a modest scale and do not, therefore, outweigh the harm identified above.
16. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Juliet Rogers

INSPECTOR