



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2025

by **Les Greenwood MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3348410

148 Wentworth Way, South Croydon, Croydon CR2 9ET

- 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 Muhammad M Khan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 23/04435/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 2 storey single family dwelling to the side of the existing semi-detached pair to create an end of terrace dwelling comprising 3 bedrooms and associated living space across 2 storeys.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024, during consideration of the appeal. Both main parties have had an opportunity to comment on these changes.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and this part of Wentworth Way.

Reasons

4. Wentworth Way is a residential street lined mainly by semi-detached houses, with a few terraces and flats. No 148 is typical of the street, a red brick and tile house of fairly plain design. The proposal would replace a single storey side extension and detached garage with an attached 2 storey house of similar design, creating a terrace of 3 houses and infilling the space all the way to the side boundary.
5. The layout of the buildings on this side of Wentworth Way includes wide gaps at first floor level, allowing views through to an extensive area of open space behind. These views of sky and trees give the street a sense of spaciousness, linking the street to the countryside beyond. The proposal would largely close down the gap between No 148 and the neighbouring flats at Nos 144 and 146, which is also affected by the side stair to the upper flat. It would appear cramped and would block most of the view through, to the detriment of this important aspect of local character.

6. The appellant refers to several other developments on Wentworth Way. None of these have, or would have, the same impact on local character. The terrace of houses opposite and the new house at No 77a are on the other side of the street, where the views through the frontage are of more residential properties rather than open space. Likewise, No 97 is on the other side of the street and the 2 permitted houses in its back garden would not be comparable. I understand that the Council has granted permission for a 2 storey extension at 114 Wentworth Way, on the same side of the street as No 148, but have not been provided with full details of that scheme. Other cases referenced by the appellant are on other streets, where the impact would necessarily be different. I have assessed this proposal on its own merits.
7. I have a further concern about one particular design element of the proposal - an unusual feature on the rear roof which, due to its position, proportions and continuous glazing from first floor level up, would appear as more of a tower than a typical dormer window. Although design innovation should generally be encouraged, this would be an awkward addition, bearing no clear relationship with the much more traditional form of the house, and would be seen from both the street and the open space to the rear.
8. The Council raises a number of other design concerns which I do not share. The proposed house would be slightly narrower than the semis to which it would attach, but would be set back and set down slightly so that it would be an appropriately subsidiary element which would not harm any important building rhythm in the street scene. The use of a full gable and the proposed windows (except as above) would reflect the design of the existing houses.
9. I nevertheless conclude that the proposal would unduly harm the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached houses and this part of Wentworth Way. It conflicts with The London Plan 2021 policies D3 and D4, Croydon Local 2018 Plan policies SP4 and DM10 and the Framework, which seek high quality design that responds to the existing character of a place.
10. The new version of the Framework further emphasises the Government's aim of boosting the housing supply. This proposal would, in a small but significant way, make more efficient use of urban land to help to meet this objective, with particular reference to Framework paragraphs 61 and 129. TLP policy D3 and CLP policy SP2 also emphasise the need to provide more homes, including through incremental densification like this. Framework paragraph 129(d) does say, however, that the efficient use of land should take into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting. I have not seen any evidence of a shortfall of housing land supply in Croydon that would override my concerns regarding the main issue.
11. I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan, taken as a whole. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR