



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025

by **J Heppell BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/W/24/3357248

47 Wrights Road, South Norwood, Croydon SE25 6RY

- 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 & Mrs Bonsu Amoako against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application Ref is 24/02996/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a change of use from C3 (residential) to Sui Generis (HMO).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the proposal on housing choice; and
 - the effect of the proposal on on-street parking and the highways network.

Reasons

Housing choice

3. The appeal property is a four bedroom end terrace dwelling. The surrounding area is a mix of terraced and detached houses. The appellant seeks permission to convert the dwelling to a house in multiple occupation (HMO).
4. In order to maintain housing choice, Policy DM1.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (CLP) states that the Council will permit the redevelopment of residential units where it does not result in the net loss of three bedroom homes (as originally built) or the loss of homes smaller than 130sqm. Although the host property exceeds 130sqm in size, having been extended following the grant of planning permission¹, the consented plans for the extension show that one bedroom was added to the property, indicating that the original property had three bedrooms. As such, irrespective of the fact that the house is now larger than 130sqm, the proposal would result in the loss of a three bedroom home as originally built.
5. The appellant has referred to the London Borough of Croydon's Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (SHMAU) dated November 2019, which contains a Housing Mix (Size of Homes Needed): Key Message advocating that market housing schemes should include 10-15% of 1-bed homes, 45-50% of 2-bed

¹ LPA reference 02/01220/P

homes, 20-25% of 3-bed homes and 15-20% of 4-bed homes. Croydon's Housing Strategy 2023-28, whilst highlighting the role that HMOs can play in meeting housing need, aligns itself with the aims of the SHMAU. There is no indication in either document that the need for smaller homes outweighs the policy support for retaining three bedroom homes as originally built.

6. The appellant has also referred to the Croydon Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22 (dated March 2023), which identifies that there was a small rise in the number of homes with three or more bedrooms between April 2020 and March 2022, from 16% to 17%. However, the Report makes it clear that this was against the strategic target in Policy SP2.7 of the CLP of 30% of all new homes having three or more bedrooms up to 2036. Consequently, the Report does not provide support for the appellant's contention that the proposal does not pose a threat to the supply of homes with three or more bedrooms.
7. The appellant has argued that Policy DM1.2 is logically aimed at preventing three bedroom dwellings from being purchased and extended with the express purpose of converting them into HMOs. It is pointed out that the appeal property was extended to a four bedroom house over 20 years ago and is no longer a family home as defined by Policy DM1.2. However, paragraph 4.21 of the CLP explains that the retention of residential units originally designed with three or more bedrooms is supported by the Council. Hence Policy DM1.2 is unambiguous in seeking to prevent the net loss of properties which were originally built as three bedroom homes, irrespective of whether the property has been extended.
8. My attention has been drawn to an appeal which was allowed for a temporary change of use to a HMO at 16 Southcote Road, South Norwood, London SE25 4RG². The appeal related to a six bedroom house, with no suggestion that the property had originally been a three bedroom house. The Inspector determined that there was no evidence to support the retention of family housing, in the context of there being no policy protection for a six bedroom dwelling. In the current instance, there is no dispute that the appeal property was originally built as a three bedroom dwelling, thereby distinguishing it from the development subject of the referred-to appeal.
9. The proposal is reversible to the extent that planning permission could be applied for to turn the property back into a family dwelling. However, permanent rather than temporary permission is sought, and so there could be no guarantee of the property reverting to a single household residence.
10. I am satisfied from the evidence that the proposal would avoid an unacceptable concentration of HMOs. At the same time, I am unconvinced that allowing the appeal would help address a social imbalance in the local community, particularly as there will be no certainty over the background of the HMO's occupants. For the above reasons, I conclude the development would adversely affect housing choice in the area, contrary to policies DM1 and SP2 of the CLP. Together these seek to enable housing choice for sustainable and socially balanced communities.

On-street parking and the highways network

11. The appeal site has a Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) rating of 2 and, although it is located close to an area with a PTAL rating of 4, it has relatively poor

² Appeal reference APP/L5240/W/21/3288139

accessibility to public transport. The Council has confirmed that there is sufficient space within the site for cycle storage to be provided in accordance with local standards. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to expect residents of the appeal property to place a degree of reliance on the motor car.

12. Policy T4 of the LP requires the cumulative impacts of development on public transport and the road network capacity to be taken into account and mitigated, and for development proposals not to increase road danger. Policy T6 of the London Plan March 2021 (LP) requires developments to be designed to provide the minimum necessary parking, with paragraph 10.6.4 advising that where no parking standard is provided, the level of parking should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Policies DM29 and DM30 of the CLP promote sustainable travel and reduced congestion. Taken together, the policies of the LP emphasise the desirability of minimising parking, and insofar as there is a tension with the aim of Policy DM30 of the CLP of reducing the impact of car parking in areas of existing on-street parking stress, the more recent policies in the LP carry greater weight in decision-making.
13. There are no local parking standards for HMOs. The Council has suggested treating each bedroom within the HMO as a one bedroom residential unit for the purposes of calculating a parking requirement. I consider such an approach would overstate the parking demand for the proposal. The appellant has argued that tenants of an HMO are likely to have lower-than-average levels of car ownership compared with a four bedroom house that could potentially accommodate a multi-generational family owning several cars. However, in my judgement, the proposed development with seven bedrooms, six of which are double rooms, is likely to accommodate more adult and independent residents than a single household four bedroom dwelling. Therefore, I consider it likely the development would lead to an increase in parking demand.
14. There is disagreement between the parties about whether the proposal is able to make provision for a car to park on site. Although the appellant's plans do not indicate an on-site parking space, I noted on my site visit the presence of a dropped kerb and a pair of gates opening onto a flat grassed area. I therefore consider that the site can potentially accommodate a parked car, and that a condition could be attached to ensure its retention and use were I minded to allow the appeal. Notwithstanding the existence of this parking space, I consider that additional on street parking is likely to result from the development, given my conclusion on the likely demand for parking generated by the proposed HMO. The increase in parking is likely to be minor given the scale of the proposed development.
15. The majority of properties in Wrights Road and Canham Road do not benefit from private parking, meaning that residents and visitors with cars are likely to rely on kerbside parking. However, there are no on-street parking controls aside from yellow lines at road junctions, and so there is significant scope for roadside parking near to the appeal site. Interested parties report that parking is difficult and leads to inappropriately parked cars. I have been provided with photographic evidence of cars parked in Wrights Road, including a car apparently parked across a driveway, but the evidence of parking stress is limited and fails to demonstrate that street parking has an unacceptable effect on highway safety. Therefore, whilst the proposal is likely to increase roadside parking, it would not do so to the extent that danger would be caused to users of the highway as a result of parking stress.

16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on on-street parking or the highways network and would therefore accord with Policies T4, T6 and T6.1 of the LP and Policies DM29 and DM30 of the CLP.

Other Matters

17. The appeal property is in principle an appropriate location for a HMO. I consider that the proposed accommodation would provide appropriate living conditions for future occupiers. I would not anticipate the proposed development being a source of nuisance to existing residents as it is a residential use. However, none of these factors justify granting planning permission contrary to the policy position I have identified.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons, the proposal conflicts with the development plan, when read as a whole. Material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Heppell

INSPECTOR