



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 August 2026

by **C Shearing BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/L5240/W/25/3377129

33 Purley Downs Road, Purley, Croydon CR8 1HA

- 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 Namsa One Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application ref is 25/00676/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'construction of an infill extension at fourth storey level of Block A to create two additional residential dwellings, with associated extension to the lift and stair core of the building'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/L5240/W/25/3377130

33 Purley Downs Road, Purley, Croydon CR8 1HA

- 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 Namsa One Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application ref is 25/01013/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'change of use of commercial (class E/B8) space at ground and first floor level to residential (class C3)'.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Background and Main Issues

3. Planning permission was granted in March 2022 for the redevelopment of the site to provide 267sqm of commercial floorspace and 37 residential units with associated landscaped areas, parking, cycle and refuse storage¹. I observed during the site visit that the development is substantially complete and many residential units were occupied.
4. The main issues for the appeals are as follows:
 - The effects on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area (Appeal A only);
 - The acceptability of the loss of employment floorspace (Appeal B only), and;
 - Whether the proposals would make adequate provision for car parking, cycle and refuse storage (both Appeal A and Appeal B).

¹ Council's reference 19/02276/FUL and 22/01885/CONR

Reasons

Character and Appearance (Appeal A Only)

5. The appeal site occupies a narrow strip of land tightly enclosed by a wooded railway line embankment and a waste management facility. Its immediate context is derived from the two storey prefabricated offices of the waste facility, which sits on lower ground to the northwest, and the traditional two storey homes opposite the appeal site including those on Riddlesdown Road. Further to the west there is a more vibrant and varied character surrounding Brighton Road, and properties of more consistent character lie on the far side of the raised railway line.
6. Block A has a narrow frontage onto Purley Downs Road, set behind a number of parking spaces. On this southwest facing elevation, the top storey is differentiated from the floors below by its red brick, simpler and smaller windows and its modest set back. These assist in breaking up the massing of the elevation and reducing the visual prominence of the top storey in views from the road, which sits above the surrounding building heights. The building increases further in height away from the road.
7. The additional bulk proposed would remove this distinction, substantially increasing the bulk at the top of the building and unbalancing the street-facing elevation, removing the visually subordinate appearance of the top floor. While the proposed development would be set back from the street elevation, it would nonetheless still be apparent in views from the road and surrounding area, from where the resulting height of the building would be heavily at odds with its context. There is not substantive evidence relating to the effect on views from the higher ground to the far side of the railway line, and the proposed flats would likely be obscured by the tree canopies. However, there is a heavy likelihood that the extended core and rooftop play equipment above would be apparent in longer views, particularly in winter months, accentuating the incongruous height of the building.
8. For the reasons given, Appeal A would cause harm to the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area. It would conflict with policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 (the CLP) and policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 (the LP) which require, among other things, that development respects local character and contributes positively to the townscape, including through responding to local distinctiveness through scale. Insofar as this main issue is concerned, I do not find conflict with CLP policy DM13 which concerns refuse, nor LP policy D4 which sets out the process for assessing design.

Loss of Employment Floorspace (Appeal B only)

9. Although vacant, I observed that the commercial floorspace in Block A was substantially complete, served by large windows in multiple elevations and appeared ready for occupation. These areas therefore have the ability to contribute to the Borough's stock of employment land. I understand that previous permissions for the site, which pre-date the 2022 permission which was implemented, may have approved employment uses only on a temporary basis. However, based on what I have seen this was not the case for the 2022 permission and I cannot be satisfied that the existing employment spaces were approved only on a temporary basis and I have not treated them as such.

10. Policy SP3 of the CLP adopts a '4-Tier' approach to the retention and redevelopment of land and premises relating to industrial/ employment activity, in accordance with associated table 5.1. For these purposes the appeal site has been categorised as a Scattered Employment Site and I see no strong reason to reach a different view. Despite being lower in the hierarchy below strategic allocations, the policy nonetheless protects such uses. It allows for limited residential development subject to criteria including where it can be demonstrated that there is no demand for the existing premises. The supporting text describes that marketing should be undertaken for a minimum of 18 months and the Council will need to be satisfied that the site has been offered at a price commensurate with the value of the site for the permitted uses and that active promotion has been undertaken by agents marketing the site.
11. The supporting documents describe that the property was marketed by a commercial estate agent since January 2022. While I accept the arguments for marketing before completion, I have serious doubts surrounding the ability of the premises to be marketed effectively even before planning permission for the building was granted. However, even though marketing had ceased by the time the application was made in March 2025, this could still have reasonably included an 18 month period while the building was under construction.
12. I have been provided with some details of marketing material including price, although it is not clear when that material was available, given it refers to a newly built property, which would not have been the case while it was marketed. The Council have highlighted other concerns for the accuracy of that material. References are made to online and email marketing, although details of those and the information they contained have not been provided, and reasons given for the lack of interest are brief and generalised. Overall, considered as a whole I am unable to conclude that the site has been actively promoted. Notwithstanding the Council's concerns, neither have I been provided with details to support that the premises was offered at an appropriate price.
13. For the reasons given in combination, it cannot be established with certainty that there is no demand for the existing premises. The loss of the employment floorspace under Appeal B would be contrary to policy SP3 of the CLP summarised above, as well as policies E2, E4 and E7 of the LP which together give support for business spaces and their role in supporting London's economic function.

Car Parking (Appeals A and B)

14. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 2, indicating poor access to public transport links. The London Plan at Table 10.3 sets out a maximum parking provision of up to 0.75 spaces per dwelling in this location, and policy T6.1 states that residential development should not exceed that maximum parking standard. The supporting text makes clear that reduced parking provision can facilitate higher-density development and support the creation of mixed and vibrant places that are designed for people rather than vehicles. The lack of any additional parking spaces under either Appeal A or Appeal B would therefore comply with those requirements. It is not apparent those standards should be applied, instead, as a minimum. There is not substantial evidence to support that either development would cause additional and harmful pressure on existing local parking stress.

15. In conclusion on this main issue, in the case of both Appeal A and Appeal B, the absence of proposed car parking spaces is compliant with LP policies T4 and T6.1 and SP8.17, DM29 and DM30 of the CLP which promote sustainable travel and refer back to the LP standard.

Cycle Storage (Appeals A and B)

16. The LP sets a standard of either 1.5 or 2 cycle parking spaces per unit depending on the number of bedspaces, plus an additional two for short stays. The appellant has considered the mix of the wider development as a whole, which suggests the requirement overall would be 34.5 spaces, excluding those units where cycle parking is provided in private garages. I have no strong reason to doubt that figure and on that basis the existing development would have capacity to accommodate the uplift for both Appeal A and Appeal B in Block A.
17. While I share the Council's concerns for the layout for the amended cycle stores, those amendments would not be necessary to reach a policy compliant position for the appeal schemes, and the 36 cycle spaces provided by the double rack would remain adequate. Both Appeal A and Appeal B would therefore be acceptable in terms of the level of cycle parking. They would comply with policies SP4, SP8, DM29 and DM30 of the CLP, as well as policy T5 of the LP which together promote sustainable travel and set cycle parking standards.

Refuse Storage (Appeals A and B)

18. In considering refuse storage the appellant has again considered the development as a whole, which would be reasonable to give a cohesive approach to waste management on the site. Their evidence suggests the site is able to accommodate ample space for general waste, recycling and food waste for each unit even without amendments to the refuse stores, shown to be positioned centrally on the ground floor. Again I have no strong reason to doubt the information put forward and given those arrangements are suitable for current occupiers they would also be suitable for occupants of both appeal schemes.
19. The refuse arrangements for both Appeal A and Appeal B are therefore acceptable and would be compliant with policies DM10 and DM13 of the CLP which require high quality design and that refuse and recycling facilities are treated as an integral element of the overall design.

Other Matters

20. There would be benefits from both Appeal A and Appeal B, particularly through providing new homes which would contribute to the local housing stock and to the national objective to boost the supply of homes. These would be on existing developed land and in an established built up area, reasonably well connected to services and facilities including those within walking distance. They could also be built out reasonably quickly. The proposed roof top amenity and play space forming part of Appeal A has the ability to improve the living conditions of those with access to it. There would also be economic benefits arising from the construction process and ongoing expenditure by future occupants into the local economy. The extent of these benefits is, however, limited by the scale of the proposals. The harmful effects found for both proposals would be long lasting with substantial effects and taken together the benefits of the proposals do not attract

sufficient weight to make a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

21. Both Appeal A and Appeal B would conflict with the development plan and there are not material considerations of sufficient weight which indicate that they should be determined other than in accordance with it. Both appeals are therefore dismissed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR