

1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

Ref: 22/02827/FUL
Location: 70 Croham Road, South Croydon, CR2 7BD
Ward: South Croydon
Description: Conversion of two self-contained flats into one single dwellinghouse
Drawing Nos: J004196-DD-01, J004196-DD-02, J004196-DD-03, J004196-DD-04
J004196-DD-05, J004196-DD-06, J004196-DD-07, J004196-DD-08
J004196-DD-09, J004196-DD-10, J004196-DD-11, J004196-DD-12
J004196-DD-13
Agent: Mr Spencer Copping at WS Planning & Architecture
Applicant: Mr and Mrs Lang
Case Officer: Jeni Cowan

1.1 This application is being reported to committee because:

- The ward councillor (Cllr Danielle Denton) made representations in accordance with the Committee Consideration Criteria and requested committee consideration

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee resolve to REFUSE planning permission.

2.2 The Director of Planning and Sustainable Regeneration has delegated authority to issue the planning decision with the following refusal reasons:

Reason for refusal:

- 1) The proposal would result in the loss of a residential home, which is contrary to policy SP2.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and policy H8A of the London Plan 2021.
- 2) The proposal would result in the loss of a home less than 130sqm, which is contrary to policy DM1.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018.

3.0 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of two self-contained flats into one single dwellinghouse, along with ancillary development such as the removal of the external stair on the side elevation.

Site and Surroundings

- 3.2 The site consists of a three-storey detached building, situated on Croham Road, at the junction with Dornton Road.
- 3.3 The building is in use as 2no. self-contained flats. There is a three-bedroom flat on the first floor, with an external staircase up the side of the building leading to a four-bedroom flat arranged over first and attic floors.
- 3.4 The PTAL rating is 3 and the site is situated within an area that has a high risk of surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 3.5 There is some planning history, the most of relevance being:

8771-27305
Conversion of house into 2 flats
Granted June 1987

4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The principle of the development is not acceptable as there would be the loss of a residential unit;
- The development would cause the loss of a home less than 130sqm;
- The quality of accommodation would be acceptable for future residents;
- The design and appearance of the development is an acceptable quality as the removal of the staircase is acceptable;
- The proposal would not create undue harm to the amenity of nearby residential properties and their occupiers;
- Transport matters are considered to be acceptable.

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATION

- 5.1 A total of 28 neighbouring properties were notified about the application and invited to comment. The application has also been publicised in the Croydon Guardian and on site, as the proposal is a departure from planning policy.
- 5.2 The number of representations received from neighbours in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 18 Objecting: 0 Supporting: 18

- 5.3 One of the comments included in the number of supports above was from MP Chris Philp; their comments are summarised separately in paragraph 5.6.
- 5.4 The following issues were raised in representations. Those that are material to the determination of the application, are addressed in substance in the Material Planning Considerations section of this report.

Support

- Restoration of single family dwellinghouse will improve area;
 - Restores character to the area;
 - Adds amenity to the local area;
 - Lack of need for flats;
 - Good links to schools therefore desirable location for families;
 - Due to the large drive at the front of the property don't believe there would be disruption to main road;
 - The suburb has deteriorated due to low quality bedsit conversions, which contribute to higher crime and general deterioration of properties.
- 5.5 Councillor Danielle Denton referred the application to planning sub-committee in the event that officers are minded to refuse the application, so supports the application.
- 5.6 MP Chris Philp supports the application, commenting that this would restore the character of this part of Croham Road.

6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 In determining any planning application, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of its Development Plan so far as is material to the application and to any other material considerations and the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council's adopted Development Plan consists of the London Plan (2021), the Croydon Local Plan (2018) and the South London Waste Plan (2012).
- 6.2 Government Guidance is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021). The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring that development which accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved without delay.
- 6.3 The main planning Policies relevant in the assessment of this application are:

London Plan (2021):

- D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
- D4 Delivering good design

- D6 Housing quality and standards
- D12 Fire Safety
- H8 Loss of existing housing and estate redevelopment
- T4 Assessing and mitigating transport impacts
- T5 Cycling
- T6 Car parking
- T6.1 Residential parking

Croydon Local Plan (2018):

- SP2 Homes
- DM1 Housing choice for sustainable communities
- SP4 Urban Design and Local Character
- DM10 Design and character
- DM13 Refuse and recycling
- DM23 Development and construction
- SP8 Transport and communications
- DM29 Promoting sustainable travel and reducing congestion
- DM30 Car and cycle parking in new development
- SP6 Environment and Climate Change

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance

- London Housing SPG (Mayor of London, 2016)

7.0 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

1. Principle of Development
2. Design
3. Residential Amenity
4. Standard of Accommodation
5. Transport
6. Fire Safety
7. Flood Risk

Principle of Development

7.2 Policy H8 part A of the London Plan 2021 outlines that the loss of existing housing should be replaced by new housing at existing or higher densities with at least the equivalent level of overall floor space.

7.3 Policy SP2.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 sets out that the Council will seek to deliver a minimum of 32,890 homes between 2016 and 2036 [now superseded by

the London Plan 2021 to accommodate 2,079 homes per annum 2019-29]; part g) of this policy goes on to say that this will be achieved by

'Not permitting developments which would result in a net loss of homes or residential land'.

- 7.4 The application property currently consists of 2no. self-contained residential units, comprising 1x3 bedroom unit at ground floor which has a floor area of 106.25sqm and 1x4 bedroom unit at first and second floor which has a floor area of 176.1sqm. Both of these units currently exceed the respective minimum space standards and are considered to offer a good standard of accommodation. The amalgamation of these units would create 1x7 bedroom unit, with a floor area of 282.35sqm across three storeys.
- 7.5 The proposed amalgamation of two residential units into one would result in the loss of one residential unit, with the existing housing being replaced at a lower density than existing (albeit with the equivalent level of overall floorspace). This would be contrary to policy SP2.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and policy H8A of the London Plan 2021, outlined above.
- 7.6 Policy DM1.2 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 states that the redevelopment of residential units will be permitted where it does not result in the net loss of 3-bedroom homes or the loss of homes smaller than 130sqm.
- 7.7 The ground floor unit is a home smaller than 130sqm (as the ground floor unit is below this threshold), that would not be replaced. The proposal is therefore contrary to Croydon Local Plan 2018 policy DM1.2. As the property was previously converted to flats, the 3-bedroom home was not as originally built, so is not relevant.

Design

- 7.8 Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 explains that proposals should deliver buildings that enhance local context, respond to local distinctiveness, building types, forms and proportions; and be high quality, pay attention to detail and use attractive and robust materials. Policy D4 of the London Plan 2021 is also of relevance.
- 7.9 Policy SP1.1 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 indicates that the Council will require all new development to contribute to enhancing a sense of place and improving the character of the area. Policies SP4.1 and SP4.2 of also require development to be of a high quality which respects and enhances local character. Policy DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 explains that all new developments should contribute to enhancing a sense of place and improving the character of the area.
- 7.10 The application proposes the removal of the external staircase on the side elevation of the property. This aspect does not make a positive contribution to the

character and appearance of the property, nor to the wider area, therefore, its removal is acceptable.

Residential Amenity

- 7.11 Policy D3 of the London Plan 2021 states development proposals should provide secure safe and inclusive environments, secure outlook, privacy and amenity. Policy DM10.6 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 explains that the Council will not support development proposals which would have adverse effects on the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining buildings.
- 7.12 The proposed scheme would not result in any additions of built form to the building with the result that the application scheme would not harm the outlook, daylight or privacy of the neighbouring occupants.

Standard of Accommodation

- 7.13 Policy D6 of the London Plan 2021 outlines housing development should of a high-quality design and provide adequate-sized bedrooms and residential units, as well as sufficient floor to ceiling heights and light.
- 7.14 Policy SP2.8 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 states that the Council will seek to ensure that new homes in Croydon meet the needs of residents over a lifetime and contribute to sustainable communities with the borough. This will be achieved by complying with the minimum standards set out in the Mayor of London's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and National Technical Standards (2015) or equivalent and ensuring that all new homes designed for families meet minimum design and amenity standards set out in the Croydon Local Plan's Detailed Policies and Proposals and other relevant London Plan and National Technical Standards (2015) or equivalent.
- 7.15 The proposed residential unit would consist of 1x7 bedroom unit, with a floor area of 282.35sqm across three storeys. The largest provision set out in the Policy D6 of the London Plan 2021 is a 6 bedroom, 8 person unit, across 3 storeys, which should have a minimum floor area of 138sqm; this proposal would have a floor area of more than double the size of the largest provision in Policy D6, therefore, it is concluded that this would be adequate. The property would be dual aspect, with ample garden space. The proposed scheme would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

Transport

- 7.16 Policy T4 and T6 of the London Plan 2021 seek to ensure that the road network is safe for all while ensuring that an appropriate level of parking is provided in new developments Policy SP8 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 is concerned with traffic generation, sustainable travelling and parking standards. Policy DM29 of the Local

Plan (Promoting sustainable travel and reducing congestion) part (b) requires that development must have a positive impact and must not have a detrimental impact on highway safety for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and private vehicles. At paragraph 10.29 the supporting text states “All development has an impact on traffic movement in the borough. In order to reduce impact on traffic movement the Council will require new development to promote measures to increase the use of public transport, cycling and walking”. Policy DM30 promotes sustainable growth and reducing impact of car parking in new development.

- 7.17 The site has a crossover from Croham Road to give access onto the property. The front forecourt has ample space for multiple vehicles to park. The existing access and parking arrangements will remain in situ.
- 7.18 There is access to the rear of the site, via the side of the building for occupants to park bicycles and/or store bins. Details on these aspects have not been submitted, however, officers would not consider it necessary to secure these details prior to determination. However, had the application been minded for approval, a compliance condition would have been included to ensure an adequate provision of refuse and recycling facilities are provided for the dwellinghouse.

Fire Safety

- 7.19 Policy D12 part A of the London Plan 2021 states that in the interests of fire safety and to ensure the safety of all building users, all development proposals must achieve the highest standards of fire safety.
- 7.20 The applicant has submitted a Fire Safety Statement (June 2022; reference J004196) which provides details in relation to fire safety, specifically in relation to fire appliance positioning, evacuation assembly point, safety features and access. The quantum of information supplied at this stage is considered to be acceptable and complies with policy D12 of the LP.

Flood Risk

- 7.21 SP6.4 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 requires planning decisions to ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into the development and to reduce the impact of flooding. Policy DM25 is also of relevance.
- 7.22 The site falls within an area identified at risk of surface water flooding. The application does not include information on this aspect, however, given that there would be no external development which would change the impact of the surface water flooding, i.e., the floor levels and door accesses would be remain as existing, therefore, it would not be necessary for this information to be submitted. The removal of the external stair would not impact on the levels of surface water flooding.

Other planning matters

- 7.23 Representations received set out support for the restoration of single family dwellinghouse which is believed to restore the character of the area; these aspects are not covered by policy considerations. It should be noted however that there are minimal design changes proposed (solely removal of external staircase), therefore, this would not impact on the visual character of the area.
- 7.24 Representations received set out that there is no need for more flats. There is a need for more housing, which is outlined in the Principle of Development section above (paras. 7.2 – 7.7); flats are not excluded from this need.
- 7.25 Representations received support the proposal as there are good links to schools, therefore a desirable location for families. This is not a material planning consideration; however, it is noted that the existing units are considered to be family sized, therefore the property as it is currently would enable this.
- 7.26 Representations received outline that due to the large drive at the front of the property there would not be disruption to the main road. It is considered that the existing flats or the proposed single dwelling would not give rise to disruption of the highway, as arrangements would remain in situ. This is highlighted in the Transport section above (paras. 7.16-7.18).
- 7.27 Representations received set out that the suburb has deteriorated due to low quality bedsit conversions, which contribute to higher crime and general deterioration of properties. The proposal does not include a bedsit conversion; therefore, this is not relevant to this application.

Conclusion

- 7.28 All material considerations have been taken into account, including responses to the public consultation.
- 7.29 Considering the inconsistency of the scheme with the Development Plan and weighing this against all other material planning considerations, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable in planning policy terms. The application is recommended for refusal.