



To: Chris Upjohn - Investigator,  
Assessment Team

From Monks Orchard Residents'  
Association

The Local Government Ombudsman  
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2<sup>nd</sup> June 2019

**Reference Case ID 19 000 971 Croydon**

Dear Chris Upjohn

We thank you for your evaluation of our complaint Ref ID 19 000 971 (Croydon) dated 24<sup>th</sup> May but we are very concerned that your response has highlighted some significant concerns for which we would appreciate both an explanation and clarification.

You state in your response to our complaint that:

*"We cannot question whether a council's decision is right or wrong simply because (the) someone disagrees with it. We must consider whether there was fault in the way the decision was reached that is likely to have affected the outcome."*

There was fault in the way the decision was reached.

Our response to that statement is that we agree with the Policies but have identified that the London Borough of Croydon LPA are NOT observing or implementing the London Plan adopted Policies or their own adopted Local Plan Policies. We do NOT disagree with those policies and our complaint is that the LPA are NOT observing those Policies. This is clearly set out in our complaint. It cannot be acceptable that the Local Government Ombudsman have no authority to criticise an LPA if they are allowing planning approvals in breach of their agreed and adopted planning policies.

Are you therefore inferring that it is quite acceptable that local Tax Payers who fund, at enormous costs, the drafting of Local Plans, the expense of a long period of assessment by the Planning Inspectorate and the final adoption of those policies, for the local LPA to then totally ignore those policies in the determination of proposals put before them?

The fault in the way the decision was reached was entirely due to the blatant disregard of the agreed adopted Planning Policies by the Case Officer and the LPA. Does this mean the Local Government Ombudsman has no power to consider the fallibility of Local Planning Authorities?

You then state:

*"I note you are complaining on behalf of MORA which you say represents 3,879 households in the ward. We do accept complaints from representative organisations but we need to be very clear that we have the consent of those involved"*.

As I set out in our evidence, the occupiers of the said properties 20-22 The Glade are tenants of the host properties who would be very apprehensive to make a complaint or provide consent to their involvement in any complaint as their Landlord may take objection to their involvement.



Thus, you are asserting that a Local Residents' Association cannot make representations regarding retention of local character of an area by ensuring that planning policies are observed to retain that character if the occupants do not provide evidential support for the complaint. This is contrary to the Equalities Act and undermines all the assistance we as a residents' association provide free and voluntarily to our local residents. All residents in our Post Code Areas are considered members as we do not charge a fee for membership but represent the whole area we cover for the good of the community. See:

<http://www.mo-ra.co/about/membership/>

You then state:

*"You are complaining about a planning application for a relatively minor development. I consider any fault there may have been would only affect those in the immediate area, presumably the residents of The Glade or Glade Gardens close to the site. Any injustice may vary and would likely depend on how close someone was to the development."*

All in-fill and back-garden developments are minor developments but the Policies are specific for these types of developments. You may consider that this application is a "relative minor development" but the issue is of significant importance to the local Residents Association as it is systematic of many cumulative minor in-fill and re-developments in our area that are causing great concern to the local residential population served by Croydon LPA. The injustice is to the community. If the LPA ignore Planning Policies the community loses confidence in the planning process which causes dissent amongst the community when it is necessary to have community support for providing more houses. Community support requires those necessary houses meet the agreed planning policies.

If the Local Government Ombudsman does not hold LPAs to account – who does?

We would request that you reconsider your evaluation as not to do so would indicate that LPAs can ignore planning policies when they are under enormous pressure to meet housing targets rather than respect the Policies designed to respect local character and accommodation standards.

All background and documents relating to this complaint can be found at:

<http://www.mo-ra.co/planning/planning-complaints/>

Yours sincerely



Derek C. Ritson - I. Eng. M.I.E.T. (MORA Planning).



Sony Nair – Chairman, Monks Orchard Residents' Association.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, MORA members and local residents.

**Cc:**

Sarah Jones MP

Croydon Central

**Bcc:**

MORA

Executive Committee

Interested Parties