
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 September 2016

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/W/16/3152868

Coombe House, The Quay, Plymouth PL9 7NE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs R Tooze against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02098/FUL, dated 6 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is a change of use from dwelling to 4 no. self-contained flats.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr & Mrs R Tooze against Plymouth City Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

4. The proposal involves the change of use of a large eight bedroomed house to four flats, three of which would have two bedrooms and the other having one bedroom. The site is located on a street corner at the junction of The Quay, Plymstock Road, Marine Road and Turnquay. The plans indicate parking for two cars on site; one in an integral garage and one in front of the garage. There is some opportunity for on-street parking to the front of the site alongside a low stone wall, and there is also space for two cars to park to the rear of the site immediately outside the pedestrian access gate to the property.
 5. The tandem arrangement of the two parking spaces on site would mean that it is unlikely that these two spaces could serve more than one flat without relying on the co-operation of the occupiers of different flats, which could not be ensured. The parking spaces to the rear are in a similar tandem arrangement and so it is likely that they would also only be able to effectively serve one of the flats. Consequently, the occupiers of two of the flats would most likely have to rely on on-street parking.
 6. The Council's parking standards in their Development Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document First Review (SPD) require a maximum of two spaces per two bedroom flat and one space per one bedroom flat. The site
-

is close to local shops along Plymstock Road which would fulfil the day to day needs of the occupants, and reasonably close to a bus stop on Oreston Road which is served by buses travelling to and from Plymouth city centre. Also there are pedestrian and cycle routes close to the site which link the site to the city centre. As such I consider that a parking provision less than the maximum would be justified. However the site is some distance from the city centre and other larger shops and facilities, and it is not unreasonable to expect the occupiers of each flat to have a car and therefore require a parking space.

7. The amount of on-street parking available near to the site is not extensive due to the road junction and the double yellow lines around it, and the areas for on-street parking that would be available along The Quay also serve the other neighbouring properties along The Quay, which mostly have no off-street parking of their own. As such it is considered that the additional pressure resulting from the proposal on the limited on-street parking available may lead to vehicles parking in positions close to the site which would detrimentally effect the efficient operation of the highway and be harmful to highway safety, particularly because of the site's location at a road junction.
8. I accept traffic speeds outside the site are slow, particularly due to the poor visibility for road users travelling from The Quay into Plymstock Road and vice versa, and the narrowness of Plymstock Road. However this places an even greater importance on ensuring highway safety is maintained. Also, whilst traffic volumes along The Quay are low, the road does provide access to a number of dwellings and the water front and I do not consider a more relaxed approach to highway safety would be justified.
9. I note that planning permission has recently been granted for the redevelopment of Nos 18 and 19 and that only one off street space is provided to serve three units. However, from the evidence before me, the planning history of that site was complex and differs considerably from that at the appeal site. Therefore that scheme is not directly comparable to the proposal before me. Similarly the other example referred to by the appellant relates to a development in the city centre which, in terms of the sustainability of its location, is not comparable to the appeal before me.
10. The existing house would be reasonably expected to generate some traffic movements and necessitate a number of parking spaces. However the benefit of the property being a single family home is that all four off road spaces can be fully utilised. This would not be the case in the proposed development.
11. In conclusion, the development would have an adverse effect on the safety of the users of the highway in proximity of the site. Therefore the development would fail to accord with Policies CS28 and CS34 of the Core Strategy and the SPD which require the provision of sufficient car parking in order to ensure highway safety.

Other Matters

12. It is not disputed that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing. Whilst the proposal would provide a net increase of three units towards the Council's supply, it is not considered that this would outweigh the harm that would be caused to highway safety.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR