
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2016

by B Bowker Mplan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/16/3155620

26 Soundwell Road, Soundwell, South Gloucestershire BS16 4QW

- 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 S Patel against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref PK16/0244/F, dated 20 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two-storey building comprising ground floor domestic garages and car parking with two residential apartments over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of two-storey building comprising ground floor domestic garages and car parking with two residential apartments over, at 26 Soundwell Road, Soundwell, South Gloucestershire BS16 4QW, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PK16/0244/F, dated 20 January 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location and Block Plan 316.2, Existing Floor Plans 316.3, Existing Elevations 316.4, Proposed Block Plan 316.12, Proposed Floor Plans 316.5A, Proposed Elevations 316.6A.
 - 3) The residential apartments hereby permitted shall not be occupied until undercover and safe cycle parking facilities for two bicycles have been provided within the residential curtilage of the permitted unit and thereafter retained for that purpose.
 - 4) No development shall take place until the following details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - The submission of a scheme of intrusive site investigations for approval;
 - The undertaking of that scheme of intrusive site investigations;
 - The submission of a report of findings arising from the intrusive site investigations;
 - The submission of a scheme of remedial works for approval; and
 - The implementation of those remedial works.Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
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Preliminary matter

2. The appellant has submitted an alternative design as part of the appeal. However, in the interests of clarity, my decision is based on the drawings that were before the Council as referenced in condition number 2 above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The character and appearance of the surrounding area; and,
 - Highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a gravelled area with a partly constructed garage located to the rear of Nos 26 and 28 Soundwell Road. The site abuts Midland Road which is predominantly residential in character including two storey terraced dwellings to the immediate west of the site. Staple Hill Primary School is opposite the site.
5. In the context of the terraced dwellings to the site's east and west, the proposal would not have a cramped appearance. The proposed two storey scale, roadside frontage and wall and roof materials would be in keeping with surrounding properties. Whilst the side and rear elevations contain no detailed architectural features, public views of these elevations would be limited and when glimpsed, would be not particularly harmful to the appearance of the surrounding area.
6. I agree with the appellant that the proposal would enhance the continuity of the street frontage and assist in screening views of large commercial buildings to the south of the site. In addition, the design approach of having ground floor garages and parking areas with apartments above is not an uncommon approach in residential development. In the context of the depth of No 26 and width of the wider terrace to the west, the width of each apartment would not look conspicuous when viewed from the immediate surroundings.
7. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, the proposal would meet the requirements of Policy CS1 and CS16 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (SGLPCS), saved Policy H4 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (SGLP), and paragraphs 53 – 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Combined, these policies require development to be designed to the highest possible standard that takes into account its surroundings.

Highway safety

8. The concerns of the Council and local residents relate to the absence of off street parking for the two apartments. Concern has also been raised regarding the effect of constructing the proposal on highway safety grounds. During my mid-afternoon site visit I saw that Midland Road was not busy and had a number of free parking spaces. However, I acknowledge it is likely that traffic use and on street parking would increase in the evening, particularly as

surrounding properties have no off-street parking. In addition, I note the Council's concern regarding the methodology used for the appellant's parking survey.

9. That said, I afford some weight to the non-vehicular accessibility future occupants would have to public transport and services, and to the evidence cited by the appellant regarding the low level of car ownership for flat occupants. I also note that the proposal is of a modest scale with each apartment comprising one bedroom each. Taken these considerations into account, I consider the proposal would generate a limited demand for on street parking spaces.
10. I also saw that despite parking on both sides of Midland Road, vehicles were able to move safely along the road and that pedestrians benefited from continuous pavements. In addition, road markings at the junction of Midland Road and Soundwell Road and the locality's 20mph speed limit help to ensure that on-street parking does not lead to highway safety issues. I also note that Midland Road is relatively straight offering visibility for highway users and that the main entrance to Staple Hill Primary School is at Page Road.
11. Furthermore, the site is not in an area with acute parking problems as defined by the Council's Residential Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Whilst the proposal would not meet the SPD's minimum parking requirements, in the context of paragraph 32 of the Framework, I have no evidence before me to demonstrate that a lack of parking in the surrounding area would lead to a severe residual risk to highway impact. Similarly, I have no evidence before me to indicate that the construction process would lead to a severe residual risk to highway impact.
12. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety and consequently would meet the requirements of SGLP Policy CS8 and paragraph 32 of the Framework which combined seek to promote sustainable transport and ensure development does not lead to a severe residual risk to highway impact.

Other matters

13. I note that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. However, as I have identified no harm in relation to the main issues above, I have not had to consider this matter any further.

Conditions

14. The conditions outlined in paragraph 1 above are based on those suggested by the Council. Where necessary, I have amended the wording of the conditions in the interests of precision and clarity and to comply with advice given in the Planning Practice Guidance.
15. I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. A prior to development condition relating to site investigation works is necessary based on comments from the Coal Authority. A condition requiring installation of cycling storage facilities prior to occupation of each apartment is necessary in the interests of sustainable transport.

(Continued overleaf)

Conclusion

16. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the noted conditions.

B Bowker

INSPECTOR