

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2017

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/16/3163437

14 Ardmore Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU2 9NJ

- 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 Gengiz Arif against the decision of the Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/00589, dated 18 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as change of use of building from residential C3 to House in Large Multiple Occupation including alterations to roof form to remove a dormer and re-build part of first floor with altered roof. N.B Prior Notification received for 8m extension Ref 16/W/00006.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As I saw during my visit the rear extension has been constructed, the change of use has already taken place and an area of parking has been provided to the front of the property. The appellant indicated that planning permission for the extension and loft conversion was not required as these elements were addressed through prior approval submissions. Nevertheless I have dealt with the proposal as submitted.
3. The Council determined the planning application on the basis of a plan showing two parking spaces to the front of the property. A revised drawing was submitted during the application process to indicate that four spaces could be provided. However, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the plan upon which the Council made its decision in the interest of fairness to other parties as this further plan was not the subject of consultation.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed parking arrangements on highway safety in Ardmore Avenue.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling in an established residential area which comprises detached and semi-detached properties. Ardmore Avenue is a road where there is a high level of on-street car parking and due to its narrowness many vehicles park with two wheels on the kerb.
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6. Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the property to a house in multiple occupation (HMO) together with the erection of a single storey rear extension and raising the ridge of the existing side extension. The proposal makes provision for two off-street car parking spaces on a forecourt to the front of the property reached by an existing crossover. The Council argued that because of the limited width of the crossover only one car could reasonably be accommodated on-site at any one time. However, based on my visit I consider that two vehicles could be parked on-site.
7. Where proposals seek to convert houses into HMO Policy H7 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan, 2003 (the GBLP) includes the requirement that adequate provision is made for car parking on-site in accordance with the Council's parking standards.
8. Policy G1 of the GBLP establishes general standards of development with G1 (1) requiring parking to be provided in accordance with the parking policy and parking standards of the plan. Policy G1 (2) includes a requirement for development to provide satisfactory access and that traffic generated by the development is compatible with the local road network. The Council accepts that the scheme should be assessed on the basis of its own relative merits as to whether the level of off-street car parking proposed would be satisfactory rather than any parking standards.
9. The appellant made reference to Policy H1 of the Council's emerging Local Plan and its supporting text in relation to HMO. Given the early stage of preparation of this plan I attach very little weight to it whilst noting the role of HMOs in boosting the supply of housing in sustainable locations.
10. The highway authority did not object to the scheme subject to a condition requiring cycle parking to be provided on-site. It stated that the provision of two off-street parking spaces was sufficient given the location of the site within walking or cycling distance of various facilities whilst two bus stops nearby indicated that the site was in a sustainable location with access to alternative modes of transport other than private vehicles
11. The appeal site is not located within a Controlled Parking Zone and Ardmore Avenue provides unrestricted on-street parking. The appellant has provided an analysis of car ownership levels for the ward within which the appeal site is located. Based on this analysis it was stated that if the car ownership level for flats, maisonettes and apartments was applied to the appeal scheme there would be a need for between six and seven parking spaces. The car ownership levels for these types of accommodation would also include larger units than the appeal scheme and therefore the appellant argued that a lower ownership rate could be expected in this case. Nevertheless, with two spaces provided on site this would indicate an on-street requirement for up to five spaces. However, given the standard of accommodation provided I would not expect the levels of car ownership to be significantly lower than those which occur for flats in other parts of the ward, notwithstanding the accessibility of the location. In any event I find that the development is likely to increase the demand for on-street parking in the area.
12. The appellant has indicated that residents will be encouraged to use sustainable transport modes but no evidence is provided to demonstrate how this would be achieved. In addition it was stated that within the local area there is a relatively high level of demand for parking but there is sufficient

capacity for on-street parking associated with the development even at peak hours. The appellant's parking beat survey indicated that within the study area a total of 78 spaces were available and that at the point of highest demand 10 spaces were available. However, the demand for on street parking would almost certainly lead to further parking partially on the footway, giving rise to issues of highway safety. I regard this as adversely impacting on the safe and efficient operation of the surrounding highway network and therefore find conflict with Policies H7 and G1 of the GBLP in respect of providing satisfactory access, traffic generation compatible with the local road network and on site car parking provision.

13. The appellant has drawn my attention to decisions by other Inspectors which suggest HMOs tend to attract occupiers with lower than average levels of car ownership. However, I do not know the full circumstances of these cases and in any event I have reached my decision on the basis of the planning merits of the scheme before me.

Other Matters

14. Concerns were also raised by neighbours about the scale of development on site. However, based on the information before me this is not a reason to dismiss the appeal.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, and taking account of all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR