



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/D/17/3168332

9 Coach House Mews, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7JD

- 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 Geoffrey Clark against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/10184/FUL, dated 12 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is to convert the existing garage to a living room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. In the interests of precision and brevity I have adopted the Council's description of the proposed development used in its decision notice.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the acceptability of the proposed parking arrangements and the effect of the proposed development on the safety and convenience of road users in the locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a four bedroomed town house set within a modestly sized, pleasant development laid out in a form resembling a mews around a short cul-de-sac. The cul-de-sac is accessed directly off Salisbury Road (A345), a busy highway. The appellant intends to convert his integral garage into a sitting room. The Council raises no design objection to the replacement of the garage door by a window, and I have no reason to either.
 5. Reliance is placed on the Car Parking Strategy (CPS) adopted by the Council as part of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan, in which car parking standards are set out. The standards provide that 3 car parking spaces are required for a four-bedroom house. However, paragraph 3 of the CPS clarifies that this standard applies to new residential development. In these circumstances, I find merit in the appellant's view, for much the same reasons, that the appropriate level of parking provision should reflect that which already exists at the dwelling, that is, two spaces.
 6. The driveway in front of the converted garage would be used, as now, to park one vehicle, whilst the appellant considers that a second car could be parked on
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the small, partly gravelled area to the front of the house. This would also require the removal of a flowerbed.

7. The appellant has produced a plan/diagram of the proposed layout of the area to the front of the house. This purports to show that adequate space would be available to park a second car. The plan/diagram is annotated with dimensions, but I harbour considerable doubts as to the accuracy of some of the dimensions shown.
8. For some time, the standard dimensions of a car space recommended by local authorities and other organizations has been 4.8m x 2.4m. Recently, some authorities have or are considering increasing this to 5.0m x 2.6m to reflect the increase in the size of some family vehicles.
9. Notwithstanding my doubts as to the accuracy of some of the dimensions annotated on the plan/diagram, the car parking space shown on the plan is too narrow to allow most cars to be parked acceptably entirely on the appellant's land. To my mind, there would inevitably be an overlap onto the highway, and this would probably be the cause of congestion or inconvenience to other road users.

Other matters

10. The proposal would entail the removal of a landscaped feature virtually at the entrance to the cul-de-sac, to be replaced by car parking. Landscape features throughout this small development are few and far between, and the loss of this one, which is prominently situated, would cause visual harm. I therefore share the thrust of the Town Council's objection in this regard.
11. The appellant argues precedent, in the sense that two of the cul-de-sac's dwellings have undertaken similar schemes in the past. I saw that to be the case, but no evidence has been provided as to when these schemes were carried out or whether planning permission was granted.
12. Precedent is seldom a good reason, in itself, either to grant or withhold permission, but a successful appeal could encourage others to submit similar proposals, which the Council would find difficulty in resisting, thus causing further congestion and inconvenience and probable safety issues within the cul-de-sac.

Conclusions

13. I therefore conclude that the appellant has not demonstrated that the car parking space lost by the proposal could be acceptably replaced on his own land, and that this would lead to on-street parking causing congestion and inconvenience. My conclusions on the main issue is underlined and reinforced by my other findings relating to visual harm caused by the loss of landscaping, and precedent.
14. The Council has not referred to a development plan policy in its reason for refusal, but the issues subject of my decision and conclusions are material considerations to which I attribute significant weight.
15. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into account, including the appellant's comments as to his ownership of the gravelled area,

but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR