

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 March 2017

by Clive Tokley MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/17/3166875
207 London Road, Bedford, MK42 0PY.

- 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 Mrs Eileen Bowen against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02681/FULL dated 10 September 2016 was refused by notice dated 23 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a dropped kerb and tarmac driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. London Road (A 600) is one of a number of radial routes that link the centre of Bedford with the wider highway network. In the vicinity of No 207 it is mainly fronted by residential properties but to the south of the appeal property is a local shop/post office. The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit.
 4. Within this part of London Road parking is limited to marked out bays on the south west side and lay-bys on the north east side. The two bays nearest to the shop are time limited. Apart from at the junctions parking is not restricted in the nearby side roads and at the time of my visit many spaces were available in both London Road and the side streets.
 5. No 207 is a semi-detached dwelling within a row of narrow-fronted properties (Nos 205 to 215 odd) on the south west side of London Road. Four of those six dwellings have vehicle crossovers to London Road with parking spaces in their small front gardens. The gardens are of a similar depth to that at No 207 and are of insufficient size to enable vehicles to turn around clear of the highway. The submitted drawing is imprecise but it indicates that a 2.9m wide dropped kerb is proposed with its north-western end aligned roughly with the side boundary between No 205 and No 207. In this position the crossover would coincide with part of a shallow lay-by that provides two on-street parking spaces in front of Nos 207 and 209.
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6. The Council's supplementary planning document *Bedford Borough Council - Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities* (SPD) was adopted in 2014. It indicates that residential parking spaces should have a minimum length of 5m with an additional allowance of 0.5m as a buffer zone to vertical obstructions. The officer report indicates that the front garden of No 207, between the front wall of the house and the edge of the footway is 4.6m. This space therefore falls about 1m short of the depth indicated in the SPD. The appellant indicates that there would be space to park a car at a slight angle but I consider that it would remain likely that a vehicle parked at the front of the dwelling would overhang the footway.
7. It would not be possible to turn a vehicle around in the front garden and therefore it would be necessary either to enter or leave the parking area in reverse gear. The appellant indicates that it is her intention to reverse into the parking space; however this cannot be controlled and I consider it likely that vehicles would be driven directly into the site requiring a reversing manoeuvre out onto London Road. Manoeuvres associated with reversing out into the road or into the site would constitute a hazard to all highway users, including pedestrians on the footway.
8. The appellant argues that reversing into the proposed crossover would have no greater impact than reversing into the existing parking bay or into spaces in Harrowden Road. However I noted that in Harrowden Road (which is some distance to the south east) there are long runs of un-defined car parking bays where space may be restricted and require more tortuous manoeuvres. In my view reversing manoeuvres into or out of the proposed parking space would create a greater hazard to highway users than accessing or leaving the kerbside space that would be lost by the proposal. Further; the difficulty of accessing parking spaces elsewhere does not convince me that sub-standard arrangements should be permitted here.
9. The proposal would result in the loss of at least one on-street parking space and therefore there would be no net gain of parking spaces in the area. Whilst the proposal would be convenient for the appellant I consider that this private benefit would be outweighed by the public harm arising from increasing the risk to users of the highway. The proposal would conflict with the adopted SPD and Policy BE30 of the *Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002* (LP) which indicates that regard will be had to the suitability of access arrangements.

Conclusion

10. In determining this appeal I am very much aware of the existence of crossovers to neighbouring dwellings and I can understand the appellant's motivation for seeking a similar arrangement. However each additional substandard access increases the hazards faced by all users of the highway and the presence of those crossovers does not reduce the hazards that would arise from the current proposal. Taking account of all matters I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably detract from highway safety and that the appeal should not succeed.

Clive Tokley

INSPECTOR