



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2017

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/17/3172721

Compton Court, Compton Road, Coventry CV6 6GZ

- 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 Jagdip Singh Dosanjh against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/2016/3131, dated 22 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is retention of all existing bedsits and maisonettes on ground, first and second floors. Additional 2x bedsits on first floor, 2x bedsits on the second floor. Roof alterations to create third floor, including roof lights in connection with proposal to create 18 new bedsits with communal living space. Erection of external fire escape staircase to rear and side elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the development as set out above is taken from the planning application form. This differs to that on the Council's Decision Notice dated 7 March 2017. As I am not aware of the appellant agreeing any change to the description of the development, I have determined this appeal on the basis of the original description.
3. In his appeal statement the appellant includes an extract of a drawing titled 'Fig 1. Illustrative revised parking layout'. This was not submitted as part of the planning application and also includes the demolition of an existing garage block, which also does not form part of the planning application before me. The appellant has suggested that the demolition of the garage block and implementation of this revised parking layout could be secured through a planning condition. I note that the garage block is adjacent to the boundaries with other properties, the owner/occupiers of which would not have had the opportunity to be consulted on such amendments to the planning application. Therefore, given the nature of the proposed amendments, and considering that interested parties have not been consulted on these, I have not considered the 'Illustrative revised parking layout' as part of the appeal scheme.

Main Issues

4. The Council's reason iii) for refusing the planning application, as set out in its Decision Notice dated 7 March 2017 relates to the encroachment of a proposed stairway upon a vehicular access. Following consideration of the appellant's

appeal statement, the Council is satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to address this reason for refusal and therefore is no longer seeking to defend this. I also concur on this.

5. Accordingly, the main issues are the effect of the development on:
- i) highway safety having regard to the proposed parking,
 - ii) the living conditions of existing occupiers of Compton Court having regard to the proposed parking; and,
 - iii) the character and appearance of the area in respect of the location of the proposed bin store.

Reasons

Highway safety

6. The present accommodation at Compton Court, based on the submitted plans is made up of 19 one bedroom and 2 two bedroom flats. The existing parking comprises the use of hardstanding areas to the front, side and rear of the building. None of these areas are formally marked out. There is also a block of five garages to the rear of the site, which is not in use.
7. I have not been provided with any detailed information in respect of current occupancy rates of the building or associated car parking demand. Notwithstanding this, at the time of my site visit, which was early afternoon, more than 50% of the existing parking areas, which can accommodate up to 13/14 vehicles (based on the appellants estimate) were occupied by cars. This level of parking (9 vehicles) was at a time when parking demand would usually be lower, as occupiers are likely to be at work or out undertaking other chores. Therefore, demand for parking would be higher during evenings and at weekends. As such, I would expect most of the informal parking areas to be in use during the evening and at weekends. Based on the information before me there is no evidence of any existing parking problems associated with the site. I accept that my observations only represent a snap shot. However, overall I conclude that the existing parking areas albeit informal are just about sufficient to meet the needs of the existing accommodation.
8. During my site visit I evidenced some on-street parking adjacent to the appeal site despite most nearby dwellings having garages and/or drives.
9. The proposal would result in the creation of an additional 22 units of accommodation. The most up to date parking standards available to the Council are set out under Appendix 5 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards for New Development, which forms part of the emerging 'Coventry Local Plan 2016' (CLP). The CLP has not yet been adopted. Nonetheless, the standards therein have been relied upon by the main parties and are reasonable in terms of their requirements. Therefore, I consider these to be a useful guide for calculating parking requirements.
10. Based on the emerging parking standards the appellant has calculated that the proposed development would generate the need for an additional 9 parking spaces. This is based on requiring 0.75 spaces per bed sit (5 spaces) and 4 spaces for the cluster flats. The parking for the cluster flats is based on using the standard for student accommodation, which is 1 space per four bedrooms.

11. Student accommodation is often located close or near to universities and colleges in highly sustainable locations with excellent public transport links and access to shops and services. Furthermore, car sharing is more prevalent amongst students as they tend to travel together. As such, the student accommodation parking standard is specific to this particular group. Moreover, I concur with the Council that the proposed cluster flats are very similar to the type of accommodation associated with Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO's). Therefore the 0.75 space per bedroom parking standard for HMO's is most appropriate for the development proposed. This requirement is less than that for flats, which confirms that lower car ownership is already factored for. Based on the HMO parking standard the proposed development would generate the need for an additional 16.5 (17) parking spaces.
12. The submitted proposed parking scheme 'Facilities Layout Plan' shows 18 parking spaces and the existing garages. Very little information is provided in respect of this layout as the appellant's case is predicated on 'Fig 1. Illustrative revised parking layout'. Whilst the garages are shown on this drawing there are parking spaces proposed in front of them. Therefore, given that the car parking would be unallocated for such a scheme the use of the garages would be impractical. As such, this scheme only provides 4-5 parking spaces, over and above the existing informal parking arrangement.
13. The parking standards set out under Appendix 5 of the emerging CLP are maxima. I also note that the site is in a sustainable location and the appellant is also proposing cycle storage facilities to encourage more sustainable modes of transport. Taking these factors into consideration the requirement for 17 parking spaces would be onerous. Nonetheless, the proposed additional 4-5 parking spaces would represent a significant shortfall, even based on the appellant's own calculations.
14. The proposal would result in a significant intensification of development at the site wherein the number of proposed units of accommodation would be doubled and the proposal would fail to provide sufficient parking to meet the needs of the proposed development. Consequently, the proposal would result in increased on-street parking.
15. The appellant suggests that the adjacent road is wide and capable of accommodating some on-street parking without detriment to highway safety.
16. I disagree, measuring approximately 7m, based on the submitted 'site location plan' Compton Road is not particularly wide and the appeal site is located on a bend along the road at a point where it intersects with two cul-de-sacs. During my site visit I noted that some vehicles were part parked on the pavement to allow sufficient room for vehicles to pass. Therefore, having regard to the road layout near the appeal site there is potential for highway conflict. I also observed that most dwellings near the appeal site have driveways, which reduces opportunities for on-street parking. This is also evident in the active use of the existing parking areas within the appeal site. Due to the lack of off-street parking and for convenience, residents would be tempted to park near to or on the bend, which could interfere with visibility around the site and the sites access. These factors would also impede the movement of vehicles to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and highway safety. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy AM22 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001 (CDP), which requires safe and appropriate access to the highway system.

17. I am aware that the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") advises that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Irrespective, Paragraph 35 goes on to say that developments should be located and designed where practical to create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians. For the reasons set out above the proposal would conflict with Paragraph 35 of the Framework.

Living conditions

18. For the reasons set out above the intensification of the use and short fall in overall parking provision would increase competition for limited off-street parking, which would inconvenience existing residents in that they would not be able to park at the site or nearby, to the detriment of their living conditions. As such, the proposal would conflict with the aims of Policy H6 of the CDP, which amongst other matters requires schemes for multiple housing to be considered on the basis of available car parking.

Character and appearance

19. The bin store would have a footprint measuring 4m x 2.1m. No details are provided in respect of its appearance. Nonetheless, a unit for housing bins located to the front of the building, adjacent to a path in a prominent corner position would detract from the appearance of the building and wider streetscene. However, the appellant is willing to consider alternative locations for the bin store in a less prominent location, which could be secured by a planning condition. I concur with this and on this basis I conclude that the development would not be in conflict with Policy BE2 of the CDP and the Framework, which amongst other matters seek to secure high quality design.

Other Matters

20. I acknowledge that there is some local support for the proposal, which would diversify and boost housing numbers. The proposal would also facilitate improvements to the building in terms of its appearance. However, these factors do not outweigh the harm to living conditions and highway safety, as identified above.

Conclusion

21. My findings on the effect of the proposal on character and appearance do not outweigh the harm I have identified to living conditions and highway safety arising from the lack of proposed parking. For the reasons set out above, I dismiss this appeal.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR