
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2017

by Simon Warder MA BSc(Hons) DipUD(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/17/3179040

25 Bullfinch Rise, Jennettes Park, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 8BS

- 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 Michelle Banks against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00243/FUL, dated 22 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as 'garage conversion to provide room.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Bullfinch Rise is a cul de sac and the appeal property is accessed from a shared surface drive leading from the main carriageway. A pedestrian and cycle link passes in front of the property and connects Bullfinch Rise with Chiffchaff Corner. Dwellings on this modern development have off-road parking in the form of garages, private drives and grouped parking courts. Nevertheless, the Council's evidence indicates that there is a considerable amount of on-street parking and this is consistent with my observations on the site visit. As a result of the compact layout of the development and the extent of dropped kerbs serving the private drives, there is limited space for this parking. Some parking, therefore, occurs in inappropriate places such as turning heads and close to junctions.
 4. The appellant contends that occupiers of many of the properties in the area use their garages for storage, rather than parking. This may explain the level of on-road parking. Nevertheless, there is nothing to suggest that any of these garages have been permanently converted to living accommodation. I also note that the Parish Council's consultation response to the application indicates that a condition on the planning permission for Jennettes Park requires garages to be to be retained for the parking of vehicles at all times.
 5. The appeal property is a three bedroom, end of terrace dwelling with an attached single garage to the side. Whilst the appellant argues that the private drive at the property can accommodate two vehicles, the application plans show that the 9.6m length nominally required to park two cars in tandem
-

would protrude into the adjoining shared surface drive and across the end of the pedestrian and cycle link. Moreover, in practice, the drive would need to be longer than 9.6m in order to allow room for the up and over garage door (which is proposed to be retained) to be opened. One of the photographs submitted with the appeal shows two cars parking in front of the appeal property garage with the second car protruding a significant distance into the shared surface area. The proposal to convert the garage to living space would, therefore, effectively leave the property with a single, off-road parking space. There is nothing to suggest that a single space would be adequate to serve the three bedroom property.

6. The appellant argues that the garages are too small to be used for parking. The available evidence indicates that they are 3m wide by 6m long. Whilst not generous and I consider this size to be adequate to allow people to get into and out of most modern cars.
7. The appellant has also suggested that visitors could use the parking spaces at the nearby Country Park. In my view, most visitors would not find that a convenient alternative to on-street parking closer to their destination.
8. I recognise that the shared surface drive ends at the appeal property. However, a vehicle protruding from the property into that area would compromise the space available for vehicles manoeuvre and would also obstruct users of the pedestrian and cycle link. It would, therefore, add to the incidence of inappropriate parking in the area and pose a risk to highway safety. As such, the proposal would conflict with saved Policy M9 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan 2002 which requires proposals to make satisfactory parking provision for vehicles and Policy CS23 of the Council's Core Strategy 2008 which seeks to increase the safety of travel. Nor would the proposal accord with paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires proposals to provide safe and suitable access for all people.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Simon Warder

INSPECTOR