
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2017

by Richard Schofield BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1st November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/17/3181378

11 Crawford Compton Close, Hornchurch RM12 6UA

- 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 Daniel Sharam against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref P0432.17, dated 15 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 11 May 2017.
 - The development is garage conversion to children's playroom in semi-detached house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. It was evident from my site visit that development has been completed on site. It appeared to conform to the submitted plans and I have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. On the basis of the site's planning history, cited in the planning officer's report, the appellant appears to want to regularise development that is precluded by a condition attached to the original planning permission for the dwelling. Nonetheless, in line with the approach adopted by the Council and appellant, I am treating the application as seeking planning permission for the development, rather than as an attempt to modify the condition insofar as it relates to the appeal site.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on highway safety and efficiency, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding dwellings.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is situated on a cul-de-sac in a mature suburban area. Dwellings are typically set back from the road behind front parking areas, with garages, or are set close to the roadside with dedicated off-street parking spaces, many with associated garages, nearby.
6. Even so, at the time of my early afternoon site visit there were numerous cars parked on the street on both Crawford Compton Close and surrounding roads. The appellant's own submitted photographs also show vehicles parked on the

- street. Thus, even with the available provision, a lack of off-street parking spaces would already appear to be an issue.
7. Given that the streets in question are just estate roads, and are not especially wide, it was clear from my observations that the parked vehicles obstructed the easy passage of others in places, adversely affecting the efficient use of highway.
 8. Vehicles moving around the wider estate did not appear to be travelling especially quickly and, as such, there was a reasonable amount of time to note the presence of others parked on the street. Nonetheless, in a number of instances sightlines were obscured. In addition, where vehicles were parked close to corners, passing cars had to swing out wider than they should be required to, onto the wrong side of the carriageway. In these circumstances, it cannot be in the best interests of public safety to countenance development that may well increase the likelihood of vehicles having to park on the public highway, with its commensurate adverse impacts.
 9. The wider estate was clearly designed with off-street parking provision in mind. The parking of vehicles on the highway, on streets that were not designed to accommodate them, would clearly have an adverse impact upon the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding dwellings. The sound of vehicles manoeuvring and car doors being closed, directly outside the windows of those dwellings situated close to the road, must give rise to unwarranted disturbance.
 10. Although I appreciate that my visit was a snapshot in time, it is reasonable to consider that as this was the situation while many residents were at work, it is likely to be exacerbated by an increased number of vehicles parked on the streets when residents return in the evening.
 11. Indeed, it is not disputed that this area has a very poor Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 1b, which would indicate a high degree of reliance on the private car for many journeys. This, in turn, would suggest that a good level of off-street parking provision for such vehicles is necessary. Policy DC33 of the Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (the Core Strategy) requires 1.5 to 2 spaces per dwelling in these circumstances. Taking the former garage of No 11 as one space, the driveway would be a second. Thus, the loss of the garage as a parking area results in just one parking space for the dwelling, in conflict with adopted planning policy.
 12. The appellant notes that the garage was too small to park a car within it. I am not unsympathetic to this position, given the increasing size of modern cars, but there is no substantive evidence before me to support it. In addition, this position would appear to be undermined by the appellant's assertion that the site frontage, which is "*near enough*" the same area as the garage floor, could be converted into a usable parking space. Notwithstanding my doubts about the practicality of this, given the limited depth and scope for manoeuvring at the frontage to No 11, this suggests that the converted garage must be a usable size too.
 13. 14 Crawford Compton Close and 16 Bennions Close have, presumably with planning permission, had their garages converted into living spaces. Both, however, are set further back from the road than No 11, with more extensive

frontages. As such, it appeared from my site visit that two vehicles could be accommodated more easily on the frontage of these sites than that at No 11.

14. I conclude, therefore, that the appeal scheme will have an adverse impact upon highway safety and efficiency, and on the living conditions of the occupiers of surrounding dwellings. It conflicts with policies DC33 and DC61 of the Core Strategy. These seek, among other things, to ensure that new development complements or improves the amenity of the area, and that conversion of residential parking space to alternative uses occurs only where parking provision is in excess of current standards and is not required to meet the parking needs of residents, or the Council has identified public off-street parking as being surplus to requirements.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole. I do not consider there to be any material considerations that would outweigh this conflict and, thus, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Schofield

INSPECTOR