



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2019

by Rachael Pipkin BA (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/W/19/3226341
4A Old Forge Close, Poulner BH24 1GZ

- 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 Ruckwood of Linford Land & Development Ltd against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/11533, dated 19 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is relocation of new parking space 4A; reinstatement of bin store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The proposed parking space would occupy an area of land adjacent to the entrance to a small housing estate originally identified for planting and a footway serving a small residential development of flats and houses around Old Forge Close. The Council's officer report indicates that the development may be retrospective as an additional row of paving slabs have already been provided adjacent to the block of flats. This is also what I observed on my site visit. I have also been provided with a photo showing a car parked in this space although there were no vehicles parked in this space at the time of my site visit. Nevertheless, I have proceeded to consider the appeal on the basis that the parking space is in use.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - The character and appearance of the area; and
 - living conditions with regard to outlook from the kitchen window of the adjoining flat, and the convenience of occupants of the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. This small, cul-de-sac housing estate derives much of its character and attractiveness from the combination of planting and hard landscaping, and the openness of the access leading to the cul-de-sac beyond. As originally

designed, it appears all car parking for the estate was provided within the site, either under covered parking areas or in marked out bays in front of houses and under a large tree. As such, parking does not dominate the site.

5. The site is located within an area which the Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document 2013 (SPD) emphasises the importance of garden and greenspace as an integral part of cul-de-sac layouts, parking and vehicular areas. The extension of hard landscaping to create the additional parking space harms that character.
6. The removal of a long section of planting and its replacement with paving slabs along the side of the access road, creates a stark and less visually interesting and attractive entrance. This detracts from the overall character and appearance of the cul-de-sac estate, which would be further harmed when a car is parked in the space as a result of a cluttered streetscape.
7. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It therefore conflicts with Policy CS2 of the New Forest District Core Strategy (New Forest District outside the National Park) (the Core Strategy) 2009 which requires, amongst other things, new development to contribute to local distinctiveness and to incorporate well integrated car parking.

Living conditions

8. The access road serves a number of properties within the estate, providing both vehicular and pedestrian access via a shared surface. The car parking spaces within the estate, with the exception of a visitor space to the front of the cycle storage, are separated from the mixed circulation area.
9. The parking space is adjacent to a kitchen window within the flank wall of the block of flats. This window is set up quite high from ground level but not above the height of a car. Due to the proximity of the parking to this window, there would be some loss of outlook for occupiers of this flat when cars are parked and this would be worse if high sided vehicles were to be parked here. While parking is of a transient nature, it would nevertheless be possible for parking to occur on a more permanent basis. This would lead to unacceptable harm to the outlook from this window.
10. The parking space occupies a section of footway running along the side of the block of flats. Based on what I have seen and read, this area is not wide enough to enable people to exit their vehicle without stepping into the small area of retained vegetation along the flank wall of the building. The parking area does not therefore appear wide enough to accommodate a car without it projecting onto the access road. While it would still be possible for another vehicle to pass by, the proposal will reduce the width of the access and it will mean that pedestrians could not easily pass along the access at the same time. This would be inconvenient for all users of the access road.
11. When a car is parked, pedestrian access to the site would be via the access road. This road has a very low volume and speed of traffic. While existing arrangements on site mean pedestrians and vehicles share the same space within the site, it is currently segregated at the site entrance. There would be some inconvenience arising for pedestrians having to walk around the parked

car. This would be harmful given the current separation of the car parking from the mixed circulation space.

12. Furthermore, photographic evidence submitted shows that due to the length of the proposed parking area it is possible for two cars to park within this area. Where this has occurred, it has entirely blocked the footpath from the front entrance to the block of flats. This would result in occupiers having to gain access to their flats through the landscaped area rather than the hard surfaced footpath. This would be inconvenient to users if crossing this area during inclement weather as the ground could be wet and muddy. It would also make access difficult for anyone using a buggy or with restricted mobility as it would not provide step free access, which the footpath does. This results in an unacceptable inconvenience to occupiers of the estate.
13. I conclude that the proposed development harms the living conditions with regard to outlook from the kitchen window of the adjoining flat and inconvenience for occupants of the development. It therefore conflicts with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy which requires development not to cause unacceptable effects on local amenities.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has suggested that the Council has requested more parking on site and that this is supported by the resident adjacent to the parking space. However, I have no evidence before me to support this position and in any event, this would not overcome the harm arising from the proposed parking that I have found.

Conclusion

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

Rachael Pipkin
Inspector