
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2019

by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/W/19/3227355
75 Highfield Road, Bognor Regis PO22 8PD

- 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 Trish Paul against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref BR/215/18/PL, dated 26 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is conversion of single dwelling to form 6 in number new two and one bed flats with associated ancillary services in a sustainable development area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Trish Paul against Arun District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of future occupiers and existing residents, with particular reference to on-street parking.

Reasons

4. The Council is reliant on the use of the West Sussex Residential Parking Demand Calculator to calculate the number of parking spaces required at new residential development on a site-specific basis. In support of the appeal the appellant has submitted a 'Parking Report'. It details the required parking provision and shortfall for the existing dwelling and proposed 6 flats using the aforementioned calculator: the net result of which is a shortfall of 4 parking spaces.
5. In their statement of case the Council state that the appellant's report does not take into account the short driveway in front of the existing garage which has historically been used to park a small car. Moreover, the impact of the proposed parking space in front of the property parallel to the road, which would require the need for more road space to manoeuvre a vehicle in to it. If these factors were taken into account the shortfall in the number of parking spaces would increase. However, the Council has not provided an alternative figure, therefore the appellant's case is based on a shortfall of 4 parking spaces.

6. The Council's concern is that the shortfall in the number of parking spaces at the site of the proposed development would result in an increase in pressure for on-street parking spaces. This would lead to the need for occupiers of the proposed development and existing residents to park further away from their homes, the consequence of which would be harmful to their living conditions. At the time of my site visit (around 12:30pm) I did not see any evidence of pressure for on-street parking spaces in Highfield Road in the vicinity of the appeal site. However, given the time of day this is unremarkable as many residents may have been away from their homes either at work or going about their daily business.
7. Nevertheless, I saw that on-street parking in Highfield Road is restricted by double yellow lines immediately south of the appeal site at the junction with an unmade road (part of Highfield Road), and on both sides of the road at the bridge over the railway line. Additionally, because of the predominantly terraced housing there is a general lack of off-street parking between the railway bridge and the small parade of shops at the junction with Highfield Gardens.
8. I also saw that the parade of shops includes a hot food takeaway outlet and further north along Highfield Road at the junction of Bersted Street there is a convenience store. The pressure and hence competition for on-street parking spaces in Highfield Road would therefore be exacerbated due to customers of these outlets parking, albeit not for very long, at a similar time of the day to when some residents return home in the evening.
9. The appellant has sought to demonstrate that the shortfall of parking spaces, and hence any overspill parking, can be accommodated on the adjacent highway network. The 'Parking Report' includes the results of a parking stress survey which indicates that within the full study area (an area of approximately 200 metres around the appeal site) there are an ample number of parking spaces available. Furthermore, within Highfield Road there are also sufficient parking spaces to accommodate any overspill. However, Highfield Road is a reasonably long road and examination of the results reveals, at the times of the survey, that the number of available parking spaces between the railway bridge and the parade of shops at the corner of Highfield Gardens to be relatively low. A total of 4 available parking spaces were identified in zones 75 to 81 and 148 to 154 on the first day of the survey and a total of 2 available parking spaces were identified in the same zones on the second day of the survey. Thus, the shortfall in the number of parking spaces would not always be accommodated for within the vicinity of the appeal site.
10. The results of the parking stress survey compare reasonably well with, and hence add weight to, the representations of local residents who report that there is already pressure for on-street parking spaces. Likewise, the comments made by the Highway Authority who state that 'parking is currently at a premium along Highfield Road and on-street parking spaces are limited'. Although the survey has identified that parking spaces would be available in streets south of the appeal site beyond the bridge over the railway line and further north along Highfield Road beyond the junction with Highfield Gardens, I do not consider it reasonable for existing residents in the vicinity of the appeal site to have to routinely park further away from their homes in the evening and overnight than they do now: based on the evidence before me

I consider this is something they would have to do if planning permission were granted.

11. I note the appellant considers that because the appeal site lies reasonably close to key services and shops, and the proposed flats being smaller units, future occupiers of the proposed development need not be reliant on having a private car, particularly if they work locally. However, whilst this may be the case there is no guarantee that future occupiers of the flats would not own a vehicle. In any event, I note the appellant does not dispute the use of the West Sussex Residential Parking Demand Calculator to calculate the number of parking spaces required at new residential development, which amongst other things takes account of expected levels of car ownership.
12. Overall, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would result in an increase in pressure for on-street parking spaces and therefore would be significantly harmful to the living conditions of future occupiers and existing residents.
13. Consequently, the proposal would not accord with the living conditions aims of Policies T SP1 and QE SP1 of the Arun Local Plan 2011-2031, which requires amongst other things that new development protects the living conditions of future occupiers and existing residents.

Conclusions

14. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Bremford

INSPECTOR