

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2019

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/D/19/3232014

307 Vicarage Farm Road, Hounslow, TW5 0DR

- 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 Srikanth Sadhu against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref 01151/307/P2, dated 14 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is the formation of a vehicular access to front of house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling with a service lane to its rear and sited alongside a church and flats complex fronting a busy classified road. The proposal is as described above and would encompass a crossover of some 3.1 metres in width. The Appellant sets out cogent reasons why this would be beneficial and should be allowed. The Council is concerned over the points set out as the main issue above.
 4. In October 2016 the Council produced a detailed document of relevance: Residential Crossover and Off-Street Parking Policy (PP) which sets out requirements for these matters. The Council accepts that in pure measurement terms the scheme would comply with this document's guidance. However the document is based on the over-arching premise that there must not be harm from a scheme to highway safety.
 5. There is no debate that a reversing manoeuvre would be required either to enter or leave the front hardstanding. This well used road, which is not of particularly great width, has a lot of activity in close proximity to the appeal property including high traffic and pedestrian flows generally, along with the adjacent church and flats access, some drop off activity, a bus stop almost opposite and single sided parking. To my mind it is not an environment where one would wish to sanction any reversing manoeuvre unless it was absolutely essential and infrequent. One way or another traffic flow would likely be interrupted which is not desirable on a classified road and I am concerned that
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the movement of cars to and from this property would impinge on the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicle users.

6. I can appreciate, for the range of reasons given by the Appellant, that the rear access lane is not considered ideal in terms of access and parking. Nevertheless it appeared to me to be like numerous other rear service lanes found behind main road properties and to be a practical and well-used proposition. Garages and car spaces were in use at the time of my visit including at the appeal premises. A frontage parking space may be desirable for the Appellant but to my mind it is not a pre-requisite for the transport and parking arrangements of this house to be deemed as satisfactorily operational.
7. I did notice an extremely limited number of properties along this stretch of main road with dropped kerbs and frontage parking; I do not know the planning history of these premises. The vast majority of local homes rightfully do not have this arrangement and consequently safety as a whole benefits in this area. Those few examples with frontage access cited by the Appellant do not form a precedent and I must in any event determine this case on its own merits.
8. Policy EC2 of the Council's Local Plan (LP) seeks, amongst other matters, to ensure that crossovers are suitably considered via adopted parking policy and that these and associated development would not prejudice highway and pedestrian safety. LP Policy CC2 is concerned with achieving good design with development which functions effectively and embodies pedestrian and cycle safety amongst other matters. I conclude the appeal scheme would conflict with these development plan policies and the related over-arching objective of the October 2016 PP document cited above. In this case the public harm from proposal would clearly outweigh any benefits to the Appellant and the household.

Overall conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on highway and pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR