
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/19/3242051

54 Victoria Arms, Victoria Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3SE

- 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 Daniel Philbert against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref: 19/00723/FULD, dated 14 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is the construction of new two-bedroom dwelling to the rear of 54 Victoria Road, Mortimer Common (Victoria Arms Public House)
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon highway safety.

Reasons

3. The site is to the rear of a public house. Part of this area has previously been developed to provide two dwellings, which have their own defined parking and manoeuvring areas. The remainder of the space is currently in use for car parking and manoeuvring space for the public house. This is accessed from Victoria Road. The surrounding area contains a combination of residential accommodation, community facilities and business premises.
4. The proposed dwelling would result in the loss of some of the existing parking that serves the public house. This would result in a lower provision of parking spaces. This causes concern as the evidence before me is indicative that, at times, the amount of demand for parking spaces would exceed supply.
5. I have had regard to the appellant's suggestion that a fifth car parking space could be provided in front of 50 Victoria Road. However, I do not appear to have been provided with details regarding the size of this space, how it would be accessed, whether vehicles would be able to manoeuvre in and out safely and the potential impacts on other vehicles accessing the adjacent dwelling, the proposed development, or the public house. As such, I do not believe that I could impose a planning condition requiring the provision and retention of this space.
6. In consequence, should the development proceed, vehicles are likely, at times, to be displaced onto the surrounding road network. This poses a significant concern as the surrounding area features parking restrictions, bus stops and a

substantial number of dropped kerbs. In consequence, the ability of the surrounding road network to absorb the demand for extra car parking spaces is significantly diminished. Whilst there may be enforcement powers available to tackle inappropriate parking in those areas with restrictions, there is a likelihood that this would displace parking into areas without such restrictions. This competition for spaces is likely to increase the likelihood of unsafe parking practices.

7. The result of this is that, at times, unsafe parking practices, such as parking on corners, junctions or visibility splays would be encouraged. This would not be conducive to securing good levels of highway safety, owing to the potential to block visibility for other road users and pedestrians. My attention has been drawn to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), however, it is clear (within paragraph 109) that any adverse effect on highway safety is not acceptable.
8. There is some debate regarding the validity of the appellant's parking survey as it was undertaken in the month of August. However, even if I were to agree with the appellant, I would conclude that the survey still illustrates that, at times, the peak demand for parking spaces could not be accommodated within the revised off-street parking area associated with the public house. Accordingly, cars would be displaced onto the surrounding streets. As previously identified, this would impinge upon highway safety.
9. I recognise that the site is in proximity to a bus stop and that some users of the public house might elect to travel to and from the premises by public transport. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest that this bus stop has only recently been installed. In consequence, the submitted parking survey would have been carried out at a time that when public transport was available. This survey also demonstrates that, at times, the demand for parking spaces would exceed the supply post development. Accordingly, I do not find that the presence of public transport sufficient to overcome my previous concerns.
10. Whilst the site is close to residential accommodation, the likelihood remains that some patrons, or staff, might elect to travel to the public house from further away. Should they wish to visit or leave at times when public transport is not available then a private car might be an attractive means of travel to the public house.
11. I have noted references to the Manual for Streets. However, given that I have also been referred to an adopted planning policy that seeks to prevent an adverse effect on highway safety and have also identified how it would be impinged by the proposed development, I do not find that this reference overcomes my concerns.
12. I recognise that the proposal would involve the construction of a new dwelling on previously developed land, which would add to the local housing supply. Residents of the dwelling might support the local economy in addition to any economic impacts arising from the construction process. However, these matters are outweighed by the harm to the environmental conditions of the area arising from an adverse effect on highway safety.
13. I acknowledge that the development has been designed in such a way so as to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. However, this

does not offset the harm to highway safety arising from inappropriate car parking as previously identified.

14. I therefore conclude that the development would have an adverse effect on highway safety. The development, in this regard, would fail to accord with the requirements of Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) and the Framework. These, amongst other matters, seek to improve and promote opportunities for safe travel and to prevent an adverse effect on highway safety.

Other matters

15. I acknowledge efforts made by the appellant in designing a dwelling of an appropriate form and palette of materials and also attempting to overcome previous reasons for the refusal of planning permission. Whilst these are matters of note, it does not overcome the harm as previously concluded.

Conclusion

16. For the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR