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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 January 2020

**by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 21 February 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/19/3237117**

**227 Columbia Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH10 4EG**

- 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 Sam Stone against the decision of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.
  - The application Ref 7-2019-27361-A, dated 10 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 June 2019.
  - The development proposed is dropping kerb and carry out associated work to hardstanding at the front of the property to create an in/out parking space, making use of existing drainage and raising to the level to meet the existing footpath.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

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

### Reasons

3. The appeal property is a bungalow that fronts Columbia Road, near its junction with Glenville Road. It has a vehicular access from Glenville Road that serves a garage in the rear garden. The front garden of the property is hard-surfaced and enclosed by a block wall, with a central pedestrian gate. The proposed development involves the removal of the front boundary wall, and the provision of a dropped kerb across the entire site frontage, to create a new vehicular access and hardstanding.
4. The new access would be off Columbia Road, which is a District Distributor Road. The supporting text to Policy 8.2 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (2002) (the Local Plan) explains that the District Distributor Network is designed to connect areas of residential, shopping, industrial and commercial development with each other, and also to the County Distributor and Primary Route Network. To enhance traffic safety on District Distributor Roads, Policy 8.2 states that access to them will be limited.
5. In the vicinity of the appeal site, Columbia Road is straight and wide, with double yellow lines on both sides to prevent on-street car-parking. Consequently, there are no physical constraints to traffic speeds. There is a speed camera approximately 150 metres to the west of the site, suggesting that a deterrent is needed to restrict traffic speeds to the 30-mph limit. I saw that there was a continuous flow of traffic using the road at the time of my site

visit, and there were pedestrians using the footpaths on both sides. Furthermore, the appeal site is located opposite a road junction that serves a large residential area, and there is a bus stop just to the east of the appeal site, and on the same side of the road. My observations, and the evidence of six personal injury accidents within 110 metres of the site, lead me to the conclusion that this is not an inherently safe stretch of road.

6. The description of the development indicates that the intention is to provide an in/out access arrangement, whereby vehicles do not need to reverse onto, or off, the hardstanding. However, no details have been submitted to demonstrate that sufficient space is available to achieve this. Even if there were enough space, it is unclear what arrangements would be put in place to ensure that the hardstanding was used in this way. With a completely open frontage, there would be nothing to prevent two cars from being parked side by side, preventing any possibility of an in/out system. It is therefore likely that the proposal would lead to reversing movements onto, or off, the District Distributor Road.
7. Visibility for drivers emerging onto Columbia Road, from the proposed hardstanding, would be limited by the side boundary fences/walls of the adjacent properties. This would be particularly the case for reversing manoeuvres, where the position of the driver would be such that pedestrians approaching on the footpath would not be readily visible. Whilst a bus is positioned at the bus stop, a driver emerging from the access would have little visibility of traffic approaching from the east. Again, this would be particularly hazardous if the manoeuvre was carried out in reverse. In these circumstances, drivers approaching from the east would have little forward visibility of the emerging vehicle.
8. These potentially hazardous conditions would be further exacerbated by the presence of the road junction opposite the site, which would be an additional source of distraction and conflict for other road users. In view of the prevalent highway conditions in the vicinity of the appeal site, therefore, the proposed access and parking would be likely to result in an increase in highway danger. I therefore see no reason to set aside the limitation placed on access to the District Distributor Road imposed by Policy 8.2 of the Local Plan.
9. The appellant has pointed to the numerous existing accesses to Columbia Road, and these were evident from my site visit. Some recent planning decisions have also been drawn to my attention, although I have not been provided with full details of the cases, so cannot be sure whether they bear comparison with the appeal scheme. In any event, each case must be considered on its own merits. The presence of other accesses in the area does not justify the provision of another one, which I have found to be likely to result in highway danger.
10. The appellant contends that the provision of additional off-street car-parking would relieve pressure on the surrounding roads, which are already congested with parked cars. At the time of my visit, there were on-street parking spaces available in Talbot Rise and Glenville Road, although I appreciate that this was during the day, and conditions may be different in the evenings and at weekends. In any event, the appeal property does have a vehicular access off Glenville Road, with a driveway long enough to accommodate at least three cars. Whilst quite narrow, I have not been provided with evidence to

demonstrate that it is not wide enough to allow an average car to be parked with sufficient room to open the door.

11. The benefit of providing additional car-parking at the front of the property is therefore limited, and it does not outweigh my conclusion that the proposal would be harmful to highway safety. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy 8.2 of the Local Plan and Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012). These policies seek to limit accesses to District Distributor Roads, and to ensure that development contributes positively to the safety of the public realm. As I have found that there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, the proposal would also be contrary to the advice in paragraphs 108 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Conclusion**

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Nick Davies*

INSPECTOR