
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2020

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

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

Decision date: 11 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/D/20/3257772

1 The Noke, Stevenage, SG2 8LH

- 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 Maria Gillett against the decision of Stevenage Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00269/FPH, dated 10 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a double storey extension to the rear and side of end terrace house. Work includes addition bedrooms and bathroom to convert a 3 bedroom to a 5 bedroom for a growing family.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the safety and convenience of highway users.

Reasons

3. No. 1 is an end of terrace house situated close to the junction of The Noke with Broadwater Crescent. The proposal involves the erection of a two-storey extension which would wrap around the rear corner of the house and extend part way across both its side and rear walls. The proposal would have the effect of increasing the number of bedrooms within No. 1 from 3 to 5.
4. Policy IT5 of the *Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031* (LP) requires proposals to comply with the *Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD). Table 3 of the SPD specifies that 2 car parking spaces are required for a 3-bedroom house and 2.5 spaces for 4+ bedrooms. However, the SPD indicates that where the level of provision calculated results in a fraction of a space, it should be rounded up to the nearest whole number. It follows that Table 3 generally requires an additional parking space when increasing the number of bedrooms in a dwelling from 3 to 5.
5. The appeal property is located in accessibility zone 3, indicating that some services and facilities are nearby and, as a result, it may be appropriate to reduce the car parking requirement. Whilst the SPD identifies that the recommended car parking provision is expected to fall within the range 75%-100% of the standards set out in Table 3, it indicates that regard must be had to the characteristics of the location and it is important that any existing

residential car parking problems are not exacerbated. It explains that, in Stevenage, many of the streets were not designed with the capacity to meet modern day levels of car ownership and this has resulted in some streets dominated by parked cars; a problem which is further exaggerated by issues of anti-social parking.

6. There are no off-street parking facilities within the appeal site and I share the view of the Council and appellant that it would be unlikely to be practical to provide any. The scheme does not include provision of off-street parking space elsewhere. There are parking bays in front of the terrace of which No. 1 forms part and on-street parking is not prohibited along The Noke for the most part. However, when I visited, both in the afternoon and evening, parking conditions were congested to the extent that vehicular access along the street was difficult in places, and I have no reason to believe that these conditions were unusual. In these circumstances, I consider that it would be inappropriate to reduce the standard required by Table 3 below 100%.
7. I acknowledge that, irrespective of whether the proposal proceeds, the appellant's 4 children, who currently share 2 of the existing bedrooms, may own cars when they are old enough. However, to my mind, the capacity of the property to accommodate adults, whether they are the appellant's family members or others, would be likely to be greater if the property were to be extended, as would the potential for an associated increase in car ownership. I consider that the proposal would be likely to lead to an increase in the demand for on-street parking space, albeit not immediately. Furthermore, given the existing congested conditions, this would be likely to lead to parking in inappropriate locations close to junctions, to the detriment of the free flow of traffic and highway safety.
8. I conclude that the proposal, which would conflict with the SPD and LP Policy IT5, would be likely to cause unacceptable harm to the safety and convenience of highway users. In this respect it would also conflict with the aims of the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Other matters

9. Whilst I understand the desire of the appellant to provide additional space for her children, in my judgement, the benefits of the proposal in that respect, although important, would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
10. The Council has indicated that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and its impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents would be acceptable. I have no reason to disagree on these particular matters and consider that in these respects the proposal would be consistent with policy.
11. Nonetheless, neither these, nor any other matters raised would be sufficient to outweigh the considerations which have led to my conclusion on the main issue and I consider on balance that the proposal would conflict with the Development Plan taken as a whole.

Conclusion

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

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR