



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 February 2021

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/W/20/3261949

25 Beaconsfield Terrace, Northampton NN1 3ES

- 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 NV Pro Limited against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2020/0794, dated 12 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House of Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for 6 occupants, with addition of rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House of Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for 5 occupants at 25 Beaconsfield Terrace, Northampton NN1 3ES in accordance with the terms of the application Ref N/2020/0794, dated 12 July 2020, and the drawing submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with approved plan: A941-1b
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be occupied by a maximum of five residents at any one time.
 - 4) Facilities for cycle storage as shown on drawing no. A941-1b shall be implemented prior to the use hereby permitted commencing and retained thereafter.
 - 5) Facilities for refuse and recycling storage as shown on drawing no. A941-1b shall be implemented prior to the use hereby permitted commencing and retained thereafter.
 - 6) The basement shall not be occupied as a bedroom or other habitable room.

Preliminary Matter

2. Notwithstanding the description of the proposed development, as found on the application form, during the planning application stage the submitted scheme

was amended to a House in Multiple Occupancy ('HiMO') for 5 occupants and the dormer extension was omitted. I have determined the appeal on this basis, and this is also reflected in my Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on parking demand, with specific regard to highway safety and amenity.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises a mid-terrace house along Beaconsfield Terrace. This, and most of the other properties within this road and nearby do not benefit from on-site parking.
5. The Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (2019) ('HMO SPD') provides advice and principles for assessing proposals for houses in multiple occupancy. This includes Principle 4, which seeks to secure the provision of adequate parking, in accordance with the car and cycle parking standards set out in the Northamptonshire Parking Standard (2016). This requires 1 parking space per bedroom for a HiMO. Based on the extant use of the appeal property and the Council's parking standards, the proposal would generate demand for two additional parking spaces.
6. Because the above parking requirements cannot be met, the appellant must demonstrate through a parking beat survey that there is sufficient capacity for on-street parking in the area. If the beat survey reveals that there is insufficient on-street, car parking capacity, the proposal needs to satisfy the following criteria. Be located within 400m of a bus stop served by bus route(s) providing a service of at least one bus every 30 minutes between 0700 and 1900 Mondays to Saturdays, and be within 400m of facilities and services contained in the town centre, a district centre, local centre or neighbourhood parade.
7. As a consequence of Coronavirus related restrictions, many residents are having to work or stay at home. Under such circumstances, I concur with the main parties that a parking beat survey would be unreliable. Nevertheless, representations made by third parties confirm that Beaconsfield Terrace and nearby roads suffer from parking stress. Also, the appeal property lies on the outskirts of a parking permit zone with parking on surrounding roads being strictly controlled. This is likely to increase parking pressure in nearby roads that are not in a permit zone, such as Beaconsfield Terrace. Accordingly, and in the absence of any information to the contrary, it is likely that there is limited on-street, car parking capacity in the vicinity of the appeal site.
8. However, the Council has confirmed that the appeal property lies within approximately 430m from a bus stop which offers at least one bus every 30 minutes between 0700 and 1900 Mondays to Saturdays, and is about 410m of shops, facilities, and services. While these distances marginally exceed the Council's thresholds, as set out in the HMO SPD, this is guidance. In any event, such limited exceedances of the Council's thresholds are unlikely to discourage future occupiers from walking to the bus stop or nearby shops, services, and facilities. I also observed that there are other shops and facilities within a 400m radius of the appeal site. Cycling storage provision is also proposed for the

development, which could be secured by a condition if the appeal were to succeed. This would offer future occupiers an alternative mode of travel.

9. Consequently, a range of shops, services, and facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents are reasonably accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. It is therefore likely that a proportion of future occupants would not need access to a car.
10. Although Beaconsfield Terrace is a no through road, there are parking restrictions along the end of it, this area provides sufficient space for vehicles to turn. Further, any unauthorised parking along here or other parts of the road could be dealt with through other regulations. Therefore, even if the proposal was to generate an increase in demand for two additional parking spaces, this would not be substantial, and there are no strong reasons before me to suggest that this would result in any significant highway safety issues.
11. In light of the above and in the absence of any clear supporting reasons, I am not persuaded that the potential increase in demand for parking spaces arising from the proposal, would unacceptably effect amenity.
12. Consequently, I conclude that any parking demand arising from the proposal would not be to the detriment of highway safety or amenity. Therefore, the proposal would not conflict with Policy H30 of the Northampton Local Plan, adopted 1997, which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that a HiMO does not create substantial demand for on-street parking. There would also be no conflict with Policy H5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), adopted 2014 which amongst other matters, requires that houses in multiple occupancy do not adversely affect the character and amenity of existing residential areas.

Other Matters

13. Third parties have expressed concerns in respect of the number houses in multiple occupancy in the area, and the effects of these with regard to supporting and maintaining a balanced, mixed, and exclusive community and to protecting the neighbourhood and street scene character. These matters, along with the adequacy of the proposed accommodation for future occupiers are largely dealt with in the Council's report. I have also carefully considered these, and on the evidence before me and my visit, I have no strong reasons to reach any different conclusions. Provided that residents follow government guidelines, there is no strong reason to suppose that housing in the form of houses in multiple occupancy, correlates to high Coronavirus infection rates.
14. There is also concern over the loss of a family dwelling as a consequence of the proposal. However, I have no reason to conclude that the proposed change of use would undermine the Council's housing objectives.

Conditions

15. I have had regard to the planning conditions that have been suggested by the Council. In addition to the statutory time limit condition for the implementation of the planning permission, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plan is necessary for the avoidance of doubt.

16. A condition is imposed to secure cycle storage facilities, this is necessary to promote sustainable means of travel. A condition requiring refuse/recycling storage facilities is necessary in the interests of the living conditions of future occupiers and to protect the character and appearance of the area. It is also necessary to ensure that these facilities are available for the life of the development.
17. While I have found that five occupiers of the property would not be harmful, any increase above this would need to be assessed against relevant policies of the development plan. Therefore, a condition to restrict the number of residents occupying the property is necessary. To ensure the provision of satisfactory accommodation and living conditions for future occupants, I have imposed a condition precluding the use of the basement as a bedroom or habitable room.

Conclusion

18. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M Aqbal
INSPECTOR