



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2021

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/T2215/D/20/3264385

22 Park Lane, Stone, DA9 9RZ

- 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 D Vlok against the decision of Dartford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DA/20/01140/FUL, dated 22 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Part conversion of garage to kitchen. Retain part of garage as store area'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the part conversion of garage to kitchen. Retain part of garage as store area at 22 Park Lane, Stone, DA9 9RZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DA/20/01140/FUL, dated 22 September 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 20063DV-PP-E-(01)00; 20063DV-PP-E-(01)02; 20063DV-PP-E-(02)01; 20063DV-PP-P-(03)00; 20063DV-PP-P-(03)02; 20063DV-PP-P-(04)01; 20063DV-PP-S-(13)01; 20063DV-PP-S-(13)02 and 20063DV-PP-S-(13)03.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety and on the visual amenity of the area, with regard to the adequacy of parking provision.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mid-terrace dwelling with integral garage and one parking space to the front. The proposal is to convert part of the garage to living accommodation, with the remainder retained as a store.

4. Policy DP3 of the Dartford Development Policies Plan (July 2017) (DP) states that development will not be permitted where the localised residual impact from the development results in severe impact on road traffic congestion; safety of pedestrians, cyclists and other road users; or excessive pressure for on-street parking. It also requires that adverse effects on residential amenity or the environment must be minimised. Policy DP4 of the DP amongst other matters, states the extent and nature of proposed parking provision must be in full accordance with the adopted Parking Standards SPD.
5. The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (July 2012) (SPD) sets out that for a 3 bedroom home in urban areas, 1.5 spaces will be required. It advises for this will normally be in the form of 1 space allocated and 0.5 space unallocated. The Council state in their officer report that for an individual property, this would be rounded up to 2 spaces. I do however note, the dwelling was approved as part of a much larger scheme and that unallocated parking spaces are provided within the development, including along the access road leading to the property.
6. The preferred size of a single garage set out in the SPD is 5.5m x 3.6m or 7m by 3m. Either way, the existing garage falls significantly short of current standards. Whilst its depth is about 5.6m, its width is highly restricted, tapering from around 2.8m to about 2.35m. Furthermore, I note that the SPD states that where garages meet the minimum garage standard up to 50% will count towards the parking requirement.
7. In this case, the dimensions of the existing garage fall significantly short of the standards set out in the SPD and as such, it would not be counted as contributing towards overall parking provision when assessed against current standards. Given the restrictive width of the garage I consider that it would be unlikely to be used on a regular basis for the parking of vehicles. Indeed, this is confirmed by the appellant.
8. The dwelling is accessed via a narrow access road. There appears to be several unallocated parking bays along the access, which, at the time of my site visit were mostly vacant. Having regard to the restrictive width of the access road and the provision of bollards in places, there is little opportunity for cars to be parked along its length. Whilst the officer report refers to parking stress in the area, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence to demonstrate that this is the case.
9. The minor shortfall in parking provision even when assessed against current standards, together with the highly restricted size of the garage and the lack of evidence regarding parking stress in the area leads me to conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety or the visual amenity of the area, with regard to the adequacy of parking provision.
10. Whilst there would be some conflict with Policy DP4 of the DP in relation to parking provision, there is already a technical shortfall as the existing garage falls significantly short of the standards set out in the SPD, due to its tapering width. The proposal would not result in severe impact with regard to road congestion, safety of road users or result in excessive pressure for on-street parking and as such, complies with Policy DP3 of the DP.

Other matters

11. I note the concern raised in the officer's report that the proposal could lead to similar garage conversions along the terrace. However, any future applications would be assessed on their own individual merits.

Conditions

12. In addition to the standard 3-year implementation condition, I have imposed a condition requiring materials to match those of the existing building to ensure a satisfactory external appearance. The approved plans condition is imposed for clarity.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR