



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2021

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 September 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/C1950/D/21/3270456
53 Clover Way, Hatfield AL10 9FN

- 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 Shyam Gautam against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 6/2020/2878/HOUSE, dated 28 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension and conversion of existing garage into habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the parking arrangements associated with the proposed development on highway safety and the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling situated on a corner plot served via a shared driveway off a modern residential cul-de-sac. The shared driveway in the vicinity of the site has a relatively narrow alignment, no footpath provision and is located close to the junction with the public highway.
4. The proposal would entail the conversion of the existing single storey attached garage at the side into a habitable room and construction of a single storey pitched roof extension at the rear, which I observed had been largely constructed at the time of my site visit.
5. In terms of parking provision, the Council's Parking Standards Supplementary Parking Guidance 2004 (SPG) requires 3 off-street parking spaces to be provided for a dwelling with four or more bedrooms in this location. The conversion of the garage to a bedroom as illustrated on the submitted drawings, would result in one parking space being retained within the site.
6. The Council, however, acknowledges that the SPG expressed as maximum standards are not consistent with advice within the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework). The Council's approved Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes 2014 indicates that the car parking

standards in the SPG should be treated as guidelines rather than maximums and parking provision should be assessed on a case by case basis. Whilst I acknowledge that this is only guidance, it is a material consideration that carries some weight, as it provides evidence to assess more objectively the impact of the proposed development on highway safety.

7. In view of the scale of development, I consider that the extra demand for on-street parking generated by the development would be relatively small in the context of the overall supply and availability of parking in the area. There are no parking restrictions outside the appeal site and at the time of my site visit, there were parking spaces available nearby, although this was obviously only a snapshot in time. The appeal site would be located in a relatively sustainable location within walking distance of the local services and facilities and as such provides a viable alternative to the use of the car.
8. Nonetheless, from the evidence provided and from my observations on site, I consider that the proposed parking arrangements are neither safe nor suitable to safely cater for the traffic movements from the host property. Due to the current configuration of the site and the proposed access arrangements, vehicles manoeuvring in and out of the site would be limited by the overall level of parking provision and the restricted nature and width of the shared driveway and its associated access at the front of the appeal property. This would result in potentially additional displaced parking on the shared driveway at the front of the property and the surrounding streets, leading to the increased potential for conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians in the vicinity of the site.
9. In addition, any displaced parking and increase in parked vehicles along the shared driveway and in the narrow access road running alongside the appeal site would add to the cluttered nature of the environment and as such would cause some, albeit limited harm to the character and appearance of the area.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the highway safety and the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies D1, D2 and M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, the SPG and the Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards and Garage Sizes 2014. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek development proposals of a high quality design that maintain and where possible improve the character of the area and provide satisfactory parking provision in the interest of highway safety. It would also not accord with the Framework that seeks to ensure developments achieve safe and suitable access to the site for all users (paragraph 110), highway safety (paragraph 111), create places which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles (paragraph 112), secure a high quality of design (paragraph 126) and that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 130).

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR