



Appeal Decision

Site visit made of 20 July 2021 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L2250/D/21/3275252

12 Welson Road, Folkestone, CT20 2NW

- 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 R. Stroud against the decision of Folkestone & Hythe District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0024/FH, dated 5 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is the installation of underground car lift.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area; and
 - The effect of the development on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants of No.10 Welson Road with regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site comprises the front driveway of No.12 Welson Road, a two-storey detached dwelling located in an established residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings as well as bungalows. Most properties feature small front gardens and driveways. Welson Road is a quiet road with grassed verges and on-street parking available on both sides of the street.
 5. Although the appellant contends that the proposed car lift would not appear within the street scene for prolonged periods of time, it would nevertheless still appear prominently when in use due to its imposing scale and unconventional appearance. It would be readily visible due to its location within the front
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driveway, constituting an incongruous addition to the streetscene. I concur with the Council in that there would be insufficient vegetation within the front driveway to screen the development.

6. I appreciate that access to the car lift would only be achieved at ground level and not from within the underground vault suggesting it would not be utilised to carry out work on vehicles whilst it is raised. However, it is unclear how regularly it would be raised and I find that even momentary use and operation of the car lift would represent a distracting and uncharacteristic feature which would erode the established pattern of development along Welson Road.
7. Given the above, the development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Policies HB1 and HB8 of the Folkestone & Hythe District Place and Policies Local Plan (the 'local plan') which together seek to ensure developments are well-designed and respect local context.

Living Conditions

8. The proposed car lift would be located close to the boundary with the neighbouring property at No.10 Welson Road. Whilst I have had regard to Appendix B of the appellant's appeal statement which states that the noise levels emanating from the development would be no greater than the engine of a motor vehicle, it is unclear for how long the noise would last during each lift raise and subsequent lowering. The proposal would introduce unfamiliar mechanical noise in a sensitive location in close proximity to the neighbouring property.
9. I find that in the absence of a detailed noise report, I cannot adequately attest to what extent the proposed development would affect the living conditions of the nearby occupiers at No.10. I am also satisfied that this is a matter which goes to the heart of the acceptability of the proposed development, and must therefore be resolved prior to the grant of planning permission and not deferred for later consideration by use of a planning condition.
10. Given the above, the development would adversely impact the living conditions of the occupiers of 10 Welson Road with regards to noise and disturbance. It would therefore conflict with Policies HB1 and HB8 of the local plan and the NPPF which together seek to ensure developments do not adversely affect the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

Recommendation

11. The development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and would negatively affect the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at 10 Welson Road with regards to noise and disturbance. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
12. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR