



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2022

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18TH March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2114/D/21/3288696

40 Station Road, St Helens PO33 1YF

- 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 Mrs Laura Hewett, against the decision of Isle of Wight Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01748/HOU, dated 27 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of a wall and the creation of new off street parking and associated vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns a dwelling that faces onto Station Road and where a single car parking space would be provided. The telegraph pole to the front would intrude into the views of drivers leaving the site and looking to the south. However, the pole is sufficiently slender that the presence of approaching vehicles would still be apparent when looking in this direction due to them not being fully obscured. As a result, there would be no adverse impact from the presence of this feature. This would be the case regardless of whether or not the telegraph pole is located within the visibility splay sought by the Council's Island Roads highway consultee (IRHC), which the Appellant claims is not the case and as shown on the additional plan provided with the appeal.
4. However, despite this the dimensions of the front garden mean that there would be insufficient space to enable a vehicle to turn so that motorists can enter and leave the property in a forward gear. In these circumstances vehicles would either be reversed onto or off the carriageway in Station Road. It is usually significantly easier for drivers to control a vehicle moving forwards. It is also the case that vision looking out of the front windscreen tends to be considerably better, as there are generally blind spots to the rear which can make it difficult to see other vehicles and people.
5. The Appellant suggests that vehicle speeds in Station Road are not high because of the 30 miles per hour speed limit. Nevertheless, the road is a 'B' classified highway and at the time of my site visit there was a steady flow of traffic. Moreover, the carriageway slopes down from the north as it approaches the appeal site. During my visit I observed that traffic was free flowing in both

- directions as it passed the site, posing a significant hazard to vehicles reversing into or out of the host property despite the speed limit.
6. The Appellant indicates that there are more than 20 dwellings in Station Road with direct vehicular access but no turning area. However, in the absence of the full details and background to these cases there is nothing to show that any of these are a result of the Council's decision making. I do not therefore accept that these should be used as a precedent to justify a proposal that would, in itself, be detrimental to highway safety.
 7. Furthermore, I saw at my site visit that such examples are often located further to the north than the appeal site where I saw a number of vehicles parked in the street, which might have a calming effect on vehicle speeds or at least focus the attention of drivers on the possibility of vehicles manoeuvring in the carriageway. This was not the case in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site. Moreover, there are also a number of properties in the immediate vicinity of no. 40 that do seem to have sufficient space to enable motorists to turn within the property, suggesting that traffic conditions encouraged owners, or the Council, to ensure the provision of such space in these cases.
 8. As a result, the reversing of vehicles and manoeuvring within the highway would be an appreciably less expected occurrence near the appeal site to those regularly using the route and therefore significantly more hazardous than further to the north.
 9. As well as the slope referred to above, the appeal site is also fairly close to a bend in the road further to the south. These matters may well take the attention of passing motorists away from reversing vehicles, especially those travelling southwards. Given all the above circumstances, the Appeal site is in a relatively more sensitive and hazardous position than many other properties.
 10. Due to these factors and based on my observations at the site visit, I am not persuaded that matters such as the speed limit, good forward visibility in Station Road and the presence of properties with no turning space constitute sound reasons for accepting the proposed development. Reversing onto or off Station Road from the appeal site would be an inherently unsafe movement, resulting in an undue risk of collision with other vehicles and of causing accidents by distracting other motorists.
 11. The Appellant suggests that there is a lengthy period with no record of any accidents in the vicinity of the appeal site of 22 years, with the Council's IRHC indicating none occurring within close proximity during the last three years. While I acknowledge this record, in the above context I am concerned that this would not remain the case in the event of the appeal being successful.
 12. The IRHC suggests that a vehicle turntable may address this matter. Nevertheless, no details have been provided to enable me to conclude that it would. Such an installation does not form part of the proposal for which planning permission is sought. Furthermore, no party has suggested that such works could be reasonably secured by condition. I consider that it would amount to a substantial change to the development for which planning permission has been sought, which in the event of the Appellant wishing to pursue it should be the subject of a separate application.

13. It is concluded that because of the absence of a turning space within the site, the proposed development would be harmful to highway safety. The development would therefore conflict with Policy DM2 of the Island Plan Isle of Wight Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management Development Plan Document, March 2012, which among other things, expects development proposals to provide a safe environment.
14. The intention of the Appellant to install an electric car charging facility at the property in the future has been brought to my attention. However, allowing the development on this basis would be at the unacceptable expense of highway safety. It is concluded that there are no other considerations sufficient to justify accepting the proposal and because of the adverse impact it is decided that the appeal fails. In reaching this decision I have had particular regard to the personal safety of the Appellant. I have also taken account of Government Policy in the Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2.

M Evans

INSPECTOR