



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 April 2022

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/22/3292582

9 Mountbatten Court, Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Essex, IG0 6DH

- 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 Balraj Singh against the decision of the Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/2535/21, dated 17 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of existing garage to a habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. The Council's decision refers to policy T1 in the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017 (LPSV) which concerns sustainable transport choices. I have noted that the LPSV has been submitted for examination, that the hearings have taken place and that the Inspector has issued interim advice on the necessary actions to enable soundness to be addressed. I have also noted that at 24 March 2022 the Inspector's report on the main modifications consultation had not been published. I have not been told of any significant changes that would affect policy T1 insofar as it relates to this appeal. As such, it can be given significant weight for the purposes of this appeal in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on on-street parking and the character of the area. The development plan includes policy ST4 in the Epping Forest District Local Plan & Alterations (1998 & 2006) (LP) which seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development proposals do not result in traffic generation that will have excessive adverse effects on the character of the area. LPSV policy T1 requires that developments provide appropriate parking provision in accordance with adopted Parking Standards and which mitigates any impact on on-street parking provision within the locality. Those policies are consistent in those respects with national policy in the Framework which identifies that patterns of movement and parking considerations contribute to making high quality places.
4. The appeal site comprises a small, modern semi-detached dwelling on a short cul-de-sac, off Lower Queen's Road, within a residential area close to the centre of Buckhurst Hill. The dwellings were built with garages and a condition

- of the original permission required that the garages are retained solely for that purpose.
5. The garage at the appeal site is attached to the dwelling and forms one half of a pair of garages, the other serving the adjacent house at no 10. As built originally, they were set back from the front wall of the dwellings but have since been extended at the front, bringing them in line with the dwellings. The appellant says that the original garage at the appeal site was converted to provide a utility area and the front part is used for bicycle storage. He says that the existing layout is not suitable for parking and that the proposed use would be for a home office and study.
 6. At the time of my visit during the middle of a week day, I saw that despite the area's proximity to good public transport links, both this cul-de-sac and Lower Queen's Road were very heavily parked. There are no on-street parking restrictions in Mountbatten Court and I noted parked cars on both sides of the cul-de-sac for much of its length, many of which were parked in part on the footway. Given its narrow width and short length, the high level of on-street parking does little to enhance the quality of the area and undermines its residential character. The extension of the garage has resulted in insufficient space for a car to park on the drive without encroaching onto the footway or the road and I saw a small hatch back car at the adjacent dwelling overhanging the full depth of the footway.
 7. Although the existing layout of the garage cannot provide a full parking space, it has the potential to provide one together with the remaining drive. Although the application states that the property would be a car-free development, there is no means to secure that and the proposed conversion would result in the loss of this potential parking space and the loss of the current bicycle storage. The displacement of parking onto the highway would add unacceptably to the already high level of on-street parking in this short cul-de-sac and the surrounding area. This would result in significant harm to the character of the area and the proposal would fail to provide sufficient parking or alternative transport provision for the dwelling. It would, therefore, be contrary to the local and national policies referred to above.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and to the Framework and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector