
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/22/3290562
74 Draper Close, Andover SP11 6YR

- 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 Ben Bryant against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02696/FULLN, dated 14 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is car port changed to an enclosed garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the Council's edited version of the description of the proposed development in the banner heading above, which omits unnecessary details.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the development on:
 - the safe and efficient use of the highways; and
 - the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Highways

4. The appeal property is located on an estate of relatively recent date. The design and layout of the estate clearly seeks to define where it is desirable for vehicles to park. This is either within off-road spaces, including car ports, or within unallocated inset bays. Though on-street parking is not subject to restriction within the immediate vicinity, the carriageway is too narrow for this to be practical without causing an obstruction to the flow of traffic. Thus, during my visit, I observed some vehicles parked partly on the pavement. In this position they both obstructed use of the pavement and caused a minor obstruction of the carriageway. Given the layout of the estate I have no reason to believe that this is an unusual occurrence.
5. Within this context the appeal property is semi-detached and shares an integral carport with the adjoining property. The carport provides one parking space each. The carport was not in use at the time of my visit, however, were it to be

used by 2 cars the fit would be reasonably tight. In this regard the lack of a central partition within the carport functions to allow some overlap in the opening of doors. This is an arrangement which necessarily assumes considerate positioning of cars within the spaces.

6. The installation of a central partition would clearly reduce the amount of space available for the opening of doors, removing scope for overlap. Indeed, the width of the spaces would fall to around 30-40cm below the Council's minimum standard. Given the already tight fit, this would most likely render use of the carport for the parking of cars wholly impractical. Whether or not motorbikes could be accommodated instead, the development would thus cause a loss of parking capacity, giving rise to a potential overspill of 2 cars.
7. As established above, the layout of the estate provides little scope for on-street parking beyond unallocated inset bays. The latter are intended for use by visitors. Though there appears to be nothing to stop residents from using visitor spaces, this reduces capacity to accommodate visitors. Reducing the amount of space available for parking would increase competition for the remaining space, which would in turn increase the likelihood and frequency of parking on pavements. Insofar as the obstruction this causes directly compromises the function and safe use of both the pavement and carriageway, the development would exacerbate existing problems.
8. The appellant states that different standards are operated by other Councils, and that some garages on the estate do not comply with those used locally. However, the Council contests the latter point, and I have not been provided with any details to substantiate these claims. As such, they do not alter my findings above.
9. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would have an unacceptable effect on the safe and efficient use of the highway. The development would therefore conflict with Policy T2 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 (the LP), which sets out minimum standards for parking spaces, and Policy T1 of the LP insofar as this requires that development does not have an adverse impact on the function and safety of the local highway network.

Character and appearance

10. The orderly way in which parking provision has been catered for within the design and layout of the estate has been outlined above. This helps to inform the overall character of the estate. In this regard parking on pavements is clearly at odds with the character of the estate. Given that I have found that the development would increase the likelihood of such activity due to the inadequate size of the parking spaces within the carport, it follows that the development would undermine the character and appearance of the estate.
11. The development would therefore again conflict with Policy T1 of the LP insofar as this also requires that developments do not have an adverse impact on the character of the local highway network.

Other Matters

12. It is claimed that the development is required to enable secure storage of a motorbike whose use would be more environmentally efficient than a car. However, whilst a garage may be more secure than a carport, there is no

necessity to store a motorcycle in a garage. Any environmental benefits of motorcycle use could thus be achieved whether or not the development took place. There is otherwise no certainty that future occupants would drive motorcycles rather than cars, and this equally extends to occupants of the adjoining property. Claimed environmental benefits do not therefore attract weight in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above the development would have unacceptable effects in relation to highways and local character, giving rise to conflict with the development plan. There are no other considerations which alter or outweigh these findings. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR