



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2022

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/21/3284145

Flat A, 49 Howbury Street, Bedford MK40 3QU

- 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 Dr Jenni Thomas against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01128/FUL, dated 19 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with dormer to rear and velux windows to front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway safety with regard to vehicle parking.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a mid-terrace property which is subdivided into flats. On the information before me, the proposal will increase the net bedrooms from 2 to 4 at Flat A.
4. The Council's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities: Design & Good Practice, adopted September 2014 (Parking Standards) require a minimum of 2 spaces for a 2/3-bedroom dwelling and 3 off road parking spaces for a 4-bedroom dwelling. As a consequence of the proposal, Flat A would become a 4 bedroomed unit and would therefore increase parking demand by 1 parking space.
5. Like the majority of existing properties along this road, the appeal property does not benefit from off-street, car parking. However, it is common ground between the main parties that the area has parking problems.
6. Although my visit represents a snapshot, I noted that around midday there were very few parking spaces available along this part of Howbury Street and surrounding area and I observed some incidents of inconsiderate parking. For example, a vehicle was parked at the southern end of Howbury Street, making turning manoeuvres within this part of the highway particularly difficult and hazardous.
7. Moreover, demand for parking spaces is likely to increase during the evenings and weekends when residents return from work or other activities. Therefore,

and in the absence of any strong evidence to the contrary, Howbury Street and surrounding streets suffer from high levels of parking stress. Further, this is likely to be compounded by additional demand arising from the nearby shops in Castle Road and Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs).

8. Therefore, the proposal would be adding to the existing parking stress which can result in associated problems such as inconvenient and hazardous parking, to the detriment of highway safety. As such, I find the proposal contrary to Policy 31 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (Adopted January 2020) which amongst other things requires that planning applications should give particular attention to certain considerations, including highway capacity, parking provision, safety or general disturbance to the area.

Other Matters

9. In the absence of provision for additional parking, the Council has supported proposals nearby that have generated additional demand for parking. However, in most of those cases, the alterations to provide additional bedrooms could have been undertaken without the need for planning permission under the provisions of permitted development. In another case in respect of a flat, that property was located within a CPZ and as such in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards, there was no requirement for additional parking. The appeal site does not benefit from the same permitted developments rights and is not in a CPZ and therefore the site circumstances are sufficiently different for me to take a different approach.
10. Whilst a parking demand survey was not required for validation purposes, these can be useful to demonstrate any spare parking capacity in support of a proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR