



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2022

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/22/3301282

154 High Street, Old Woking, Woking GU22 9JH

- 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 Peter Allan against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: PLAN/2022/0260, dated 22 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is a new crossover and dropped kerb.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on highway safety.

Reasons

3. No.154 is a semi-detached residential property located on the southern side of the High Street. The High Street is relatively enclosed with a mixture of commercial and residential buildings to each side. It is part of a through route from Woking connecting to the A247 and at the time of my site visit it was busy with relatively constant traffic. Most properties in this stretch of the road do not have a vehicular access, but exceptions include the properties to either side of the appeal site (Nos.156 and 152). Like these adjoining properties the appeal site has a set of double gates to the road, and the space to the side of the property is utilised for parking.
4. The County Highway Authority has raised concerns regarding the visibility, and the appellant acknowledges that visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m, in line with Manual for Streets, cannot be achieved. To the east is a curve in the road and views in that direction are severely restricted by the brick gate post and the neighbouring building (No.156) which are both sited on the back edge of the pavement. Consequently, a vehicle exiting the site would have to project some distance to observe approaching vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians from the east. Similarly, highway users travelling towards the site would not see the access point until they are in close proximity.
5. Existing mirrors on a lamp post to the other side of the road provide some increased visibility of the road traffic, but these mirrors are associated with No.156 and are positioned and angled accordingly. I do not know the background to this access and there are no details before me which indicate that these, or other mirrors, could also be secured and maintained for the

additional access to the appeal site. To the other side, the driveway to No.152 provides access to a customer car park for the retail unit within that property. As such these existing access arrangements are not directly comparable with the appeal scheme and in any event each case must be determined on its own merits and the individual circumstances involved.

6. I have some sympathy with the appellant that the space to the side of the property has been used for parking for some time and that a dropped kerb would aid manoeuvrability. Nonetheless, the obstructed visibility, together with the need for reversing manoeuvres either into or out of the site, as there is insufficient space for turning, would be hazardous to users of the highway. In addition, such manoeuvres would also be likely to restrict the free flow of traffic along the High Street which would further be to the detriment of highway safety.
7. From the information before me, there is nothing to indicate that parking or an access was a condition of the earlier planning permission¹ referred to by the appellant, or that there are any specific circumstances that require an access which would outweigh the identified harm.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal could have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would conflict with policy CS18 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework which together seek to ensure safe and suitable access arrangements, and to minimise conflicts between users.

Other Matters

9. The site lies within the Old Woking Conservation Area and as such I have a statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In my view, having regard to the nature of the development the crossover would have a neutral impact and I agree with the Council's conclusion that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Old Woking Conservation Area. Nonetheless this does not alter my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal decision APP/A3655/ID/19/3234967 - First floor side extension above open area