



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2022

by K Winnard LL.B (Hons) Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3306321
7 Priory Close Harrold Bedford MK43 7DL

- 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 Robert Hartwell against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00959/FUL, dated 25 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is single and two storey side and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application plans include Drawing No 1 block plan showing two parking spaces. As part of the appeal the appellant has included a plan for three parking spaces. As this is a minor amendment, and the nature of the concerns of who would normally have been consulted are clear from the consultation on the application proposal I do not consider that their interests would be prejudiced if I take this plan into account. I shall therefore determine the appeal and application on the basis of the plans referred to in the decision notice as well as the parking plan submitted as part of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is highway safety having regard to parking provision.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, No 7 Priory Close, (No 7), is a four bedroomed detached dwelling set within a small residential cul-de-sac of other detached dwellings. Priory Close is relatively narrow and there are no formal visitor parking spaces within it. An obvious service strip runs along the footway of the cul-de-sac, which becomes a grass verge where it fronts No 7. There is a small hardstanding area and lawn in front of No 7, and a driveway leading to a garage which is currently used for storage. There would be a loss of part of the parking provision available at No 7 as a result of the conversion and extension of the garage to the front of the dwelling.

5. The Council's Parking Standards are set out in the Bedford Borough Council Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities Supplementary Planning Document (2014) (Parking SPD). Whilst there would be no increase in the number of bedrooms at No 7, these standards provide for 3 on plot parking spaces for a 4 bedroomed dwelling. The appellant disputes the Council's assessment of the existing garage as an available space on the basis it is not used as a garage at the present time. Be that as it may, the area which would be available for car parking as a result of the proposal would be significantly reduced. It would be limited to the existing driveway which, notwithstanding the intention to install a roller door in the new storage area, would be considerably reduced in length and to the small hardstanding in front of the dwelling.
6. The appellant's amended plan indicates that there would be on site parking spaces measuring 2.5 x 5 metres for up to three vehicles. Given the size limitations of the current hardstanding, and the positioning of the dropped crossing, I do not share this view. Notwithstanding that the parking space dimensions shown on the amended plan do not allow for the buffer zones recommended in the Parking SPD, the parking spaces illustrated extend beyond the current hardstanding. As such they encroach upon part of the lawn and grass service verge. No alternative landscaping scheme, nor details addressing the impact, if any, on an extension of the hardstanding onto the service strip are before me. Nor have any technical drawings been put to me illustrating how vehicles would be manoeuvred to and from the appeal site. On the information before me the proposal would have a significant effect on the parking provision at No 7 leading to an overhang of a vehicle or vehicles on the footway/grass service verge, or a demand for on street parking.
7. Priory Close is relatively narrow and because of existing crossovers/dropped crossings scope for on street parking is limited. In my view it would be unlikely for additional vehicles associated with No 7 to park in relatively close proximity without causing an obstruction. In such a confined location, any additional on street parking would cause a hazard and would adversely affect visibility and the safety of drivers leaving the appeal site and adjacent/nearby properties. Consequently, it would harm highway safety.
8. The Council has not raised any concerns in respect of the impact of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, nor to the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. I note third parties have raised concerns in these respects. I see no reason to disagree with the assessment of the Council in the light of the design of the proposal and the separation distances involved. However, the absence of harm in these respects does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
9. For the above reasons, I therefore find that the proposal would not provide adequate parking in compliance with Policy 31 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 which requires development proposals not to have any significant adverse impacts on access to the public highway with particular attention to parking provision, safety or general disturbance to the area. It would also conflict with Policy HAROLD NDP4 of the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan (2020) which requires proposals for new development to make adequate provision for vehicle parking, and the guidance contained in the Parking SPD.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I hereby dismiss the appeal.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR