



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 October 2022

by B Pattison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 NOVEMBER 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/22/3297305

44-46 Bunyan Road, Kempston MK42 8HL

- 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 Homelink Properties against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01442/FUL, dated 19 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of part of first-floor level into one (1x) one-bedroom flat and one studio flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, with regard to the adequacy of the parking provision, waste and cycle storage and the potential for the displacement of vehicles on to the public highway.

Reasons

3. To meet the needs of the proposed residential units, submitted plan GL/2020-04/04A dated 05/20 is annotated to show a pedestrian walkway, two car parking spaces allocated to residential occupiers and bin and cycle storage in the external area to the side and rear of the property that currently serves to provide communal parking opportunities for the range of different commercial units and uses that also exist at the property.
4. I note that with regards to a previous appeal¹ in respect of a similar proposal at the site, the Inspector found the site to be heavily congested with vehicles, to such an extent that vehicles were being parked back-to-back. I have also taken account of the Council's observations and find that the presence of numerous businesses at the site would realistically be expected to generate a strong and ongoing demand for on-site parking.
5. Furthermore, as shown on the submitted plans, as a consequence of the provision of the pedestrian walkway, two car parking spaces allocated to residential occupiers, bin and cycle storage there would be a considerable reduction of space available for the visitors and occupiers of the other on-site uses. Indeed, if other cars were to be parked in the yard area, the residential

¹ APP/K0235/W/20/3260056

car parking spaces would be inaccessible. Consequently, the appeal scheme would result in the displacement of parking to the public highway.

6. The site fronts onto Bunyan Road, identified in the Officer's Report as a classified road and which I experienced to be a busy and well-trafficked route. On-street parking opportunities in the vicinity of the site are limited and often restricted. The displacement of car parking from the site, in the context of the limited availability of unrestricted on-street parking opportunities nearby and the busy nature of Bunyan Road, would result in an unacceptable impact to highway safety.
7. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm highway safety, with regard to the adequacy of the parking provision and the potential for the displacement of vehicles on to the public highway. I therefore find that it conflicts with Policies 29 and 31 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (2020) (LP). Amongst other aspects these policies require that particular attention be given to highway capacity, parking provision and safety and that new development integrate functional needs such as refuse and cycle storage. As the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety it would also fail to comply with paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2011) (Framework).
8. The Council also alleges conflict with Policies 28S and 30 of the LP with regards to this matter. However, my attention has not been drawn to any words within these policies that are relevant to this issue. They have therefore not been determinative in my decision.

Other Matters

9. In terms of the scheme's benefits, it is the case that two additional residential units are proposed in a location with good access to surrounding facilities and services. The provision of two windfall units would make a modest contribution to the Borough-wide housing supply. This in turn would make a small contribution towards maintaining the vitality of existing local services and amenities. The main parties agree that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the site or wider area. The proposal would create jobs during the construction period and modest inward investment related to the fit out and furnishing of the units. Once occupied the units would also provide additional Council Tax revenue. These are material considerations that weigh in favour of the appeal scheme, and I afford them some weight, but these matters do not outweigh the harm I have previously identified.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, having had regard to the development plan as a whole, along with all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Pattison

INSPECTOR