



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2022

by M Ollerenshaw BSc (Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J0540/W/22/3299662

2A Fulbridge Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 3LA

- 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 Pervez Iqbal of Fulbridge Social Care against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00231/FUL, dated 31 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'proposed single storey extension to form new training room'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Pervez Iqbal of Fulbridge Social Care against Peterborough City Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development proposed on highway safety, with particular regard to whether it would make adequate provision for car parking, and the effect of the proposal on the character of the area.

Reasons

Car parking provision

4. The appeal site comprises of a semi-detached, two storey brick and render property which is currently used as a convenience store at ground floor level. The property is set back from Fulbridge Road with parking spaces to the frontage and a yard area and a two storey outrigger to the rear. The attached property to the south, No. 2, which is used as offices by Fulbridge Social Care, a specialist care consultancy, and the corner shop at the junction with St Pauls Road, are also within the appellant's ownership. To the north, the site is bounded by a detached dormer bungalow.
5. The appellant contends that the number of staff at the premises would not increase as a result of the proposed training room and that a proportion of existing employees travel to the site by public transport, cycling, drop-off or on foot. However, even if there were to be no immediate increase in staff, I am required to be mindful of the proposal over its lifetime and the number of staff at the premises could not be reasonably controlled by condition. Given the

substantial size of the proposed extension and the appellant's stated intention to intensify in-house training, the proposal would have the potential to result in a significant increase in comings and goings from the site and would represent an intensification of the use of the property.

6. The appellant's site plan indicates 6 off-street parking spaces to the front and side of Nos 2 and 2A and a further 5 spaces to the frontage of 216 St Pauls Road. Based on the evidence before me, I consider that the small number of parking spaces to the front and side of Nos 2 and 2A would be insufficient to cater for the parking requirements of the proposal given that these spaces already appear to be used by visitors to the convenience store and adjoining social care premises.
7. Although the parking spaces on the St Pauls Road frontage may have existed for some time, in the absence of a dropped kerb these spaces are not easily accessible. The evidence also indicates that these parking spaces are below the Highway Authority's minimum size requirements of 4.8m x 2.4m for parking bays, which suggests that vehicles parked here could project onto the footway and obstruct pedestrians. Reversing in or out of the spaces onto what is a busy road close to the mini-roundabout would potentially result in severe harm to the safety of other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles. Moreover, contrary to what is shown on the appellant's site plan, the location plan indicates that these spaces are not on land under the appellant's control, and are on the public highway, and therefore cannot be relied upon to serve the parking requirements of the proposal in the long term.
8. The appellant refers to the availability of on-street parking spaces on Fulbridge Road. However, the proposal is not supported by any substantive evidence as to the on-street parking capacity of Fulbridge Road. At the time of my site visit at around 10am on a Monday morning, it appeared that a considerable number of residential properties are also dependant on parking spaces along Fulbridge Road and other nearby roads. Opportunities for on-street parking were limited due to the number of driveways and several cars were parked partly on the pavement. Although only a snapshot in time, my observations indicate that there is a high demand for on-street parking in the area, which is only likely to increase in the early mornings and evenings when most residents are at home.
9. The availability of on-street parking spaces would be unlikely to be able to be reasonably relied upon, not without also displacing the car parking opportunities for others which would inconvenience existing local residents. Therefore, the proposal would be likely to lead to additional pressure for parking provision in an already congested area. This could result in overspill parking on nearby roads and potentially lead to reduced visibility at junctions due to parked vehicles and obstruction of crossovers. Therefore, based on the submitted evidence, I am not satisfied that sufficient off-street parking spaces would be provided within land in the appellant's ownership and without an adverse impact on highway and pedestrian safety.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would fail to make adequate provision for car parking and would not be harmful to highway safety. It would be contrary to Policy LP13 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019) (the Local Plan), which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that development with transport implications makes appropriate provision for safe, convenient and sustainable access to, from and within the site by all user groups.

Character of the area

11. The surrounding area is of mixed character which includes two storey terraced, semi-detached and detached properties. There are a variety of different uses, including residential properties, retail and other non-residential uses, such as a church and a veterinary surgery on the southern side of St Pauls Road. Properties in the area tend to be set back a small distance from the road frontages with more generously sized rear gardens or yards. This gives the area a generally open and spacious character.
12. The proposed extension would be well proportioned and constructed in brickwork and concrete tiles to match the existing building. Whilst it would extend a substantial distance from the rear of the existing building, it would not project beyond the two storey outrigger to the rear of the attached property, No 2. The footprint of the extension though large would be set a reasonable distance away from both the side and rear boundaries of the site. Space would therefore be maintained to the side and rear of the building. Although there would be an increased coverage of the site with built form, this would not be dissimilar to that to the rear of No 2.
13. Given these factors, I consider that the proposed extension would not result in overdevelopment of the site. Moreover, due to its proposed siting at the rear of the property, the extension would not be prominent from public vantage points, including Fulbridge Road.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to the character of the area. It would therefore comply with Policy LP16 of the Local Plan, which, amongst other things, requires all development proposals to positively contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the area and create a sense of place.

Conclusion

15. I have found no harm from the appeal scheme in relation to the effect on the character of the area. The appeal scheme would provide additional facilities for the existing business with associated benefits to the care sector, which weighs significantly in favour of the proposal. The appellant also argues that the proposal would make good use of an unused and unkempt area of land. However, at the time of my visit, the site did not have a particularly unkempt appearance that detracted unduly from the appearance of the area. Overall, I do not consider that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to highway safety and car parking provision.
16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Ollerenshaw

INSPECTOR