



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2023

by G Dring BA (Hons) MA MRTPI MAUDE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 FEBRUARY 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/22/3301918

567 Harlestone Road, Northampton, West Northamptonshire NN5 6NX

- 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 Catherine Dabbs against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNN/2022/0261, dated 2 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is a dropped kerb.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is an amended version of that stated on the planning application form as the original description contained wording that is not an act of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling located on Harlestone Road (A428), a main vehicular route into and out of the centre of Northampton. The appeal site is located opposite the right hand lane that provides turning into Lodge Way and is also in close proximity to a light controlled pedestrian crossing and the junction with Quarry Road. Whilst only a snapshot in time, at my site visit, I noted that a number of cars were parked on the road outside the appeal site and further southeast along Harlestone Road. Vehicles travelling towards the pedestrian crossing had to move over to the right hand turning lane to navigate around the parked cars.
5. Based on the evidence before me it has not been demonstrated that a vehicle could adequately turn within the appeal site so that a car could enter and leave in a forward gear. The proposal would therefore result in vehicles either stopping on the busy road and reversing into the driveway or reversing out of the driveway. A hedgerow located along the front boundary of the neighbouring attached property would impede visibility towards the pavement and any pedestrians approaching from the direction of the pedestrian crossing. Even if this hedgerow were to be removed or reduced in height as suggested by the

appellant, the visibility would improve but would still remain restricted, particularly if vehicles were reversing out onto the road.

6. Given there are no parking restrictions on this section of the road, these reversing manoeuvres would be likely to occur either between parked cars or with a row of parked cars to one side, onto the busy road. Visibility for drivers entering the road from the appeal site therefore would be impaired, even if they were in a forward gear. The proximity to the right hand turning lane opposite the appeal site and the light controlled pedestrian crossing mean that this section of road is already relatively hazardous and the proposal would add to this further.
7. The placement of a visibility mirror is identified as a possible way of improving visibility, however no information is provided on the proposed location, specification, maintenance and retention scheme, or how it would sufficiently address the significant concerns in this case.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on highway and pedestrian safety. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) Adopted December 2014 which seeks, amongst other things, to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design which incorporates safety considerations. The proposal is also contrary to the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seek, amongst other things, to ensure safe and suitable access.

Other Matters

9. I note the appellants intentions to install an electric car charging point and the benefits that this would provide. Such provision would meet sustainable travel objectives and weighs in favour of the proposal and therefore I give this matter modest weight.
10. The appellant also states that the appeal property, unlike the majority of properties along this section of Harlestone Road, does not have off street parking to the rear of the property and that they consider there to be insufficient parking opportunities within the vicinity of the appeal site. I am conscious of the benefit that the proposal would provide to the appellant and any visitors. As such, I give this matter modest weight.
11. The appellant asserts that the proposal would remove a parked car from the roadside on a route where concerns have been raised about road safety. Although this is noted, this would not materially alter or ease the traffic flow or visibility, as parked cars would be likely to remain either to one or both sides of the proposal. I therefore give this matter limited weight.
12. The appellant also raises concern about the damage to vehicles parked on the road and that they consider that enforcement measures are required to restrict parking in order to improve highway and pedestrian safety. As there are currently no parking restrictions on this section of the road and I have not been informed of any intentions to change this by the Council, I have to assess the proposal based on the current circumstances, without these restrictions in place. As such, I give this matter very limited weight.
13. Whilst there are other examples of dropped kerbs within the vicinity, including at the adjacent attached property 569 Harlestone Road, no information on

whether planning permission was granted for them or when they were installed is provided. The significant majority of properties on this section of the road do not have a dropped kerb. I note that the appellant states that planning permission was granted for a dropped kerb at 547 Harlestone Road, which I was able to view on site. I have not been provided with any further information on the assessment of this particular development. In any case, this site is further away than the appeal site from the junctions with Lodge Way and Quarry Road and the pedestrian crossing and is therefore materially different.

14. None of the purported benefits of the proposal outlined above, either individually or cumulatively, outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

15. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh the harm. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

G Dring

INSPECTOR