



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by John Gunn DipTP, DipDBE, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3405/D/22/3313091

37 Haycock Road, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 4FZ

- 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 David Sable against the decision of Cannock Chase District Council.
 - The application Ref CH/22/0043, dated 4 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of existing garage to playroom and utility room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of existing garage to playroom and utility room at 37 Haycock Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 4FZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CH/22/0043, dated 4 February 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and the location plan, block plan and drawing numbers 2171/1 and 2171/2.
 3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the adequacy of on-site parking arrangements and the effect of the proposed development on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 4-bed detached house on a modern residential estate. It sits mid-way along a short private drive that provides vehicular access to a total of 4 properties. There is a single garage to the side of the house, with a hardstanding capable of accommodating two vehicles, side by side, in front of it. This provision accords with the requirement for a house of this size as set out in the Council's Parking Standards, Travel Plans and Developer Contributions for Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was adopted by the Council in July 2005.

4. The effect of the proposal would be the loss of the garage space resulting in a shortfall of one parking space when measured against the maximum car parking requirements. The appellant asserts that it would be possible to accommodate 3 cars within the appeal site and meet the Council's requirements. That said, I have no specific proposals before me in this regard, or substantive evidence to demonstrate how this could be achieved to an acceptable standard.
5. Given the size of the garden area at the front of the property, which incorporates a ramped access to the front door, there is no certainty an additional car parking space, of a size to accommodate a medium sized car, could be provided on the space available. Moreover, given the need to accommodate persons entering, and egressing the vehicle and any manoeuvring required, it is likely that the passage of other vehicles using the private drive would be adversely affected.
6. Notwithstanding the above, I am mindful that the standards provide flexibility and allow Councils to lower the requirements for on site parking for new developments, including extensions and changes of use. Moreover, the standards are expressed to be a maximum.
7. In this regard, I noted on my site visit that the estate roads in the vicinity of the appeal site were lightly trafficked and on street parking was limited. It appeared to me that a small amount of additional on-street parking would be possible and still leave adequate room for vehicles to travel along Haycock Road without harm to highway safety. On street parking is neither unusual nor necessarily harmful, but a common occurrence that reflects the reliance people place on cars to go about their day-to-day business.
8. I have taken into account other garage conversions that have been undertaken on the estate, however the context in which those developments were permitted, including the availability of on and off-street parking provision would not appear to be the same as the appeal proposal. They do not justify the proposal and I give them neutral weight.
9. In this case, there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that harm to highway safety would arise as a result of the development. The proposal would, however, provide extra living space without harm to local character or residential amenity and this is a material planning benefit.
10. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposal would not harm highway safety. It would not be contrary to the Council's car parking standards as set out in the SPD which are expressed to be a maximum and which, amongst other things, seek to ensure safety in the use of transport.

Conditions

11. I have imposed a condition to specify the relevant drawing numbers as this provides certainty.
12. A condition relating to materials is necessary to ensure a high-quality design that is sensitive to the surrounding context.
13. I have not included the condition suggested by the Council requiring the provision of parking prior to occupation as the overall quantum of parking spaces will not change from that which currently exists. Therefore, the

condition is not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions specified.

John Gunn

INSPECTOR