



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2023

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/23/3314345

Land adjacent to Broadleys, Station Road, Grateley, Hampshire, SP11 8LG

- 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 M Ward against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02511/FULLN, dated 28 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is Erection of a detached 3-bedroom dwelling, the creation of a new access onto Station Road, hard and soft landscaping and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site is adjacent to the dwelling known as Broadleys. I have therefore used the site address that the Council used in my heading above, as this more accurately describes the location of the appeal site.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

4. The proposal is to erect a detached dwelling on a narrow plot with access onto Station Road. Station Road is a relatively narrow residential road with a short stretch of residential development along its north side and the car park for Grateley Station to the south, at a lower level. The road is subject to a 40mph speed limit and is without a central white line. At my visit I observed that it is wide enough for two cars to pass, but larger vehicles straddle both sides of the road.
5. Details set out on the proposed Block Plan and Location Plan suggest that visibility for drivers emerging from the proposed access in a westerly direction is possible all the way to the road junction with Cholderton Road. At my visit however I found it difficult to obtain a clear view in this direction towards the junction on account of the obstruction caused by the vegetation at the front of the neighbouring dwelling. The proposed site plan shows visibility of just 4 metres in this direction. These factors cast considerable doubt on the suggestion that clear visibility towards the junction can be achieved.
6. The appellant accepts that eastward visibility would be below the distance required for an access onto a road with a 40mph speed limit. As such drivers emerging from the proposed access would not have sufficient visibility in an eastward direction of approaching traffic. It is suggested that a survey

undertaken by the appellant showed that vehicle speeds along this section of road are generally lower than 40mph. The details of this survey are however not before me so I am unable to interrogate its data. I note that the Council gives this information little weight and even if most vehicles passing the site would be travelling no more than 30mph the eastward visibility would still fall significantly short of the recommended distance.

7. In addition to this, close to the site on the opposite side of the road is a bus stop without a pull in, which means that buses stopping here would stop on the road. When travelling west, the presence of a stationary bus would require drivers to move out to the opposite side of the road to pass by, bringing them up close to the proposed access. In such cases the inadequacies of the eastward visibility splay would mean that drivers emerging from the access would find it particularly difficult to see a vehicle moving westward when it is passing a stationary bus.
8. I note that the appellant advises that the bus service that operates from here only makes a small number of stops each day. However, the stop is also alongside a pedestrian access to Grateley Station. Pedestrians emerging from this access onto Station Road would provide a potential additional obstacle for drivers using the road, particularly as there is no connecting pavement or verge in an easterly direction, forcing pedestrians who are heading this way to walk onto the road. There would also be the potential for drivers to stop briefly to drop off passengers who will continue their journey by bus or train. Representations also refer to school buses, to which the appellant has provided no comment.
9. Added to this is the fact that the road is not wide, so only a modest obstacle could cause a driver to pass over to the other side of the road and larger vehicles occupy a significant width of the carriageway. There are therefore numerous other possible factors that could either draw the attention of the road user away from a car emerging from the proposed access or require a driver to head westward on the other side of the road. For these reasons I find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on highway safety.
10. The appellant advises that many of the nearby dwellings have substandard access, and that local knowledge should be taken into account. Whilst I accept that some of those using the road would do so regularly and thus be aware of such deficiencies, this cannot account for all road users. Additionally, for the reasons already given, there are several other factors that could create the circumstances for a collision, even for those who know the road well.
11. Evidence submitted suggests that no accidents have occurred along the road since 2003. Whilst this weighs in favour of the proposal, details of accidents that occurred in 2003 are not clear, and this information is not sufficient to counter the characteristics of the site that are set out in the submissions and that I observed at my visit, which would cause the proposed access to be unsafe.
12. In summary, the proposal would have a harmful effect on highway safety. It would fail to accord with Policies COM2 and T1 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2011-2029. Together these Policies seek to ensure that development proposals do not have an adverse impact on the safety of the highway network.

Other Matters

13. Waste water from the proposed dwelling has the potential to enter The Solent¹. Through the process of eutrophication, increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water environment of the Solent can harm its important habitats, which in turn can displace bird species, some of which are of international importance. A proposal for an increase in overnight accommodation should seek to achieve nutrient neutrality to avoid a significant effect on the integrity of the protected sites.
14. This matter forms the basis of the Council's second refusal reason. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for another reason, this impact would not occur in any event, and these matters do not therefore need to be considered further.
15. The proposal would deliver a new family sized dwelling which would boost housing supply locally and is therefore a matter that weighs in favour of the appeal. This is not however sufficient to outweigh my findings on the harmful impact of the proposal on highway safety.

Conclusion

16. In conclusion, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations that outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR

¹The Solent covers the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar Site, and the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA.