



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2023

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/23/3324665

7 Palmer Avenue, Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex, RH12 3GQ.

- 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 Trevor Nash against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/23/0470, dated 14 March 2023 was refused by notice dated 22 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is conversion of part of existing garage into utility room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have adopted the wording for the description of development in the bullet point above used by the Council in drafting its decision notice, as it more succinctly describes the development proposed rather than that set out on the original application form.

Main Issues

3. I consider the main issues to be whether the proposed development would maintain an adequate level of on-site parking provision, or if not, it has been demonstrated that suitable alternative provision could be secured, and if not the need for the development overrides the loss of parking, while having regard for the effect of any potential loss of on-site parking on highway safety.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, 7 Palmer Avenue is a semi-detached two-storey, three-bedroom dwelling. It is located within a relatively recent and large residential development. The road layout of the estate links the development to both the original village and the by-pass.
5. It has an attached garage for one car with one additional off-road parking space on the access drive.
6. The appellant proposes the part conversion of the existing garage to form a utility room. A space of about 3.1m x 3.95m, shown as a 'garage' would be retained. While this space might be suitable for the garaging of powered two wheeled forms of transport, mobility scooter and or the storage of cycles it would not be large enough to garage a family car. If the conversion, as

designed were undertaken this three-bedroom dwelling would only have one off-road parking space.

7. From the Council's evidence, and this is not disputed by the appellant, I note that based on WSCC Parking Demand Calculator 3 off-road parking places are the recommended number of parking spaces for this property. The current house has just 2 parking spaces. The loss of the garage parking space would result in an undersupply of two off-road parking spaces here.
8. Policy 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Adopted November 2015) (HDPF) requires, along with other things, at criterion 3 that, *Development which involves the loss of existing parking spaces will only be allowed if suitable alternative provision has been secured elsewhere or the need for the development overrides the loss of parking and where necessary measures are in place to mitigate against the impact.*
9. Further, the Council has drawn my attention to condition 12 of the original planning permission for the development, reference DC/11/2074 which, required all garages to be retained for the parking of vehicles in the interests of highway safety and convenience for all highway users.
10. The short fall in on-site parking would need to be accommodated as kerb side parking. This would be due to, what I saw to be the relatively limited allocated visitor/unallocated parking provision generally throughout the development.
11. As I observed the estate roads are unclassified and not subject to identified parking restrictions. However, there are a number of existing physical restrains to on-street parking, due to the layout of the estate and more particularly the design of the roads, including their width, frequent changes of direction, number and location of crossovers to dwellings and visitor parking bays.
12. All these factors, both individually and cumulatively do, as I saw, when vehicles are parked on the roadside, result in disrupting the free flow of vehicles, on what I observed can be the quite busy estate roads serving the larger residential area.
13. On balance I consider, notwithstanding the unrestricted on-street parking locally, that given the circumstances in this case, the short fall in off-street parking provision at the appeal site would not be secured elsewhere. In turn this would be likely to result in inconvenience to other highway users, and thereby while not having an unacceptable impact, it would have some impact on highway safety.
14. I can appreciate the benefits of the provision of a separate utility room. However, I do not consider, based on the proposal before me, that the need for the development would override the loss of parking where necessary measures are not in place to mitigate against its impact.
15. In reaching this conclusion I am mindful of WSCC Highways advice to the District Council, set out in the Officer's Assessment Sheet. From my observations on site, and for the reasons set out above I consider that while this development would not have a significant impact on highway safety or result in severe cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway it would nevertheless have some impact.

16. I therefore conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed development would fail to maintain an adequate level of on-site parking provision and the impact of the loss of on-site parking has not been mitigated. To allow the development would therefore be contrary to the aims of HDPF Policy 41.

Other Matters

17. I note that the site is in an accessible and sustainable location and there would space to garage both powered two wheeled vehicles, mobility scooters and cycles. However, there would be no guarantee that the current and/or future occupiers would find such forms of transport either convenient or practical.
18. The appellant has referred me to similar developments resulting in the loss of on-site parking elsewhere in the estate. Whatever the background to those cases on a nearby site they are not an appropriate justification for permitting another here.
19. I appreciate that there would be no effect on living conditions, biodiversity or the street scene or the wider character and appearance of the area. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor in my considerations and, as such, I have given this matter very little weight in my decision.

Conclusions

20. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR