

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 December 2023

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/23/3331092

74b Knutsford Road, Grappenhall and Thelwall, Warrington WA4 2PB

- 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 S Wrench against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2022/42676, dated 21 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is the retention of fence moved from original position.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the retention of fence at 74b Knutsford Road, Grappenhall and Thelwall, Warrington in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2022/42676, dated 21 November 2022, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted relates to the following approved plans: 100322.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The proposal relates to the parking area to the rear of these terraced houses. There is space for six cars with access to them between the cars and the garden fences. The full depth of this area for both parking and turning is just over 10.5m. The council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2021 (SPD) advises that a standard parking space should be 5m long and 2.5m wide. This would leave just over 5.5m for turning manoeuvres. This parking arrangement therefore represents a relatively tight area for manoeuvring. This is emphasised by the appellant who advises that when the other parking spaces are full, a car seeking to park in the farthest space from the entrance cannot turn. It is suggested that in these circumstances, the resident reverses from the road, rather than risk having to reverse out.
 4. The proposal, which has already been carried out, extends part of the rear garden of the house nearest the entrance. This has reduced the depth of the area associated with the first parking space to just over 8.7m. This leaves an
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overall depth of under 4m for manoeuvring. Whilst this would generally be insufficient, this does not take into account that drivers reversing out of the first space would in any event, seek to manoeuvre into the main shared area in order to leave the site in a forward gear. Given that visibility of pedestrians and vehicles, particularly when reversing out into the road, is severely restricted by the high walls, it is likely that drivers would take all available options to avoid such manoeuvres.

5. The two spaces behind the appeal property are wider, as defined by the brick dividing lines, than the spaces associated with the other two houses. This offers greater flexibility with manoeuvring. No vehicle tracking evidence has been provided to support the appellant's case but it would appear that even with a relatively large car parked on the second space, as long as it is parked close to the internal boundary line, a large car parked in the first space would be able to manoeuvre between the front of the adjacent parked car and the corner of the new fence in order to either reverse into the space from the communal area or reverse out into that area. If the second car is parked leaving only limited room for parking in the first space, this arrangement would not work. However, as the appellant has control of both spaces, providing they are used accordingly, both vehicles could come and go without needing to reverse into the road.
6. The appellant has suggested that any additional reversing onto the road would make little difference given the nature of other driveways within Albert Road that require reversing manoeuvres. However, this site is not comparable with most of the other driveways as visibility is restricted by the high brick entrance piers. Generally, the driveways within Albert Road have better visibility. In any event, there is no justification for increasing highway safety concerns.
7. Overall, this parking area is relatively constrained and reducing the manoeuvring area would, in general, make parking and turning more difficult for residents. Any increase in drivers reversing into the road would add to highway safety concerns given the nature of the access. However, the small area of space that has been lost, because of its position, is not crucial for the use of the associated parking spaces. Its loss has made manoeuvring in and out of the first space slightly more difficult but not problematic assuming the residents use the full width of their parking area. It has made it more difficult for this space to be used by other residents seeking to use it for turning when it is vacant. Nevertheless, it appears that the loss of this area to garden, whilst possibly resulting in the need for more care and more manoeuvring within the private area, has not altered the functionality of this parking area to the extent that drivers are more likely to reverse into Albert Road. The development would not therefore result in greater concerns with regard to highway safety.
8. The reason for refusal refers to policy QE6 of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014. This has now been replaced by the Warrington Local Plan 2021/22 - 2038/39 which was adopted in December 2023. As I have found that the works do not increase highway safety concerns, there is no conflict with the new development plan policies or those of the *National Planning Policy Framework 2023*. Neither the SPD nor the council's House Extensions Guidelines provide advice in relation to these particular circumstances.

9. Whilst I have considered the views put forward by the council, I have not found there to be any matters that weigh significantly against the proposal. I therefore allow the appeal.
10. As the works are complete, a condition relating to the commencement of development is not required. A condition making reference to the details of the approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR