



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2024

by J Downs BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/W/23/3328049

16 The Close, Rochester, Medway ME1 1SD

- 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 Adrian Rowe of Inspire Support Services against the decision of Medway Council.
 - The application Ref MC/23/0930, dated 3 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is change of use from single dwellinghouse (Class C3) to residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (Use Class C2).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed use on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network with regard to the provision for parking.

Reasons

3. The Close is a narrow, residential street, lined by substantial dwellings on both sides. It is a dead end, with limited provision for turning. In common with many other properties on The Close, there is no off-street parking associated with the appeal property.
4. At my site visit, which I acknowledge is a short moment in time, there was significant parking pressure, with cars parked along the majority of the length of The Close. This is consistent with the evidence of the parties. Due to the narrow width of the road, cars partially parked on the footpaths on either side. These footpaths are also relatively narrow, meaning that the footpaths would not be readily accessible for people using a wheel chair or pushing prams due to the position of the parked cars.
5. There is no robust evidence before me of the likely parking demand that would arise from the development or to support the appellant's assertion that it would not give rise to greater parking demand than use as a dwelling. However, with three members of staff and four residents, the demand could be above that of a typical family dwelling. It is also acknowledged that there would be visits from other professionals. Given the clearly high demand for parking, the limited width of the road and the challenges for pedestrians, any increase in the demand for parking would have an adverse effect.
6. The appellant has set out that residents will not be able to use their own cars, but there is no mechanism before me to secure this. Similarly, while it is suggested

that staff would use surrounding public car parks and this would be funded by the appellant, there is no mechanism to ensure this would be the case. The appellant has put forward other methods to manage parking in the area such as permits, community discussions and guest parking spaces however there is no indication as to how the appellant could secure these measures or that they would be effective.

7. The appeal proposal does not make any provision for off-street parking, or to manage the parking demand that would arise from the proposed development. It would therefore have an adverse effect on the safe and efficient operation of the highway network with regard to provision for parking. It would therefore be contrary to Medway Local Plan (May 2003) Policies H8, T1 and T13 which, taken together and as they relate to this appeal, require development to make provision for parking for staff, visitors and service vehicles, and be located where the highway network has adequate capacity to cater for the traffic that will be generated by the development.

Other Matters

8. The Council has identified that the proposal would not conflict in principle with policies for the provision of residential institutions and community facilities. I have no reason to disagree. Acceptable living conditions would be provided for future occupiers of the proposed accommodation. Effects on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with regard to noise could be addressed by condition. However these would be expected of any well-designed conversion and would therefore be neutral.

Conclusion

9. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate the decision should be taken otherwise. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

J Downs

INSPECTOR