



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 May 2024

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/24/3339185

8 Atte Lane, Warfield, Bracknell RG42 2QQ

- 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 and Mrs Armstrong against the decision of Bracknell Forest Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00715/FUL, dated 24 October 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of garage, including infill of the original garage door opening with brickwork and new window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The development has taken place, and the garage has been converted therefore this is a retrospective proposal and I have dealt with it on that basis.
3. Further to the determination of the planning application, Bracknell Forest Council adopted the Bracknell Forest Local Plan on 19 March 2024 (the Local Plan). It replaces the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (adopted 2002) and the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2008). Therefore, Policy C23 of the Core Strategy Development Plan and Saved Policy M9 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan referred to in the reason for refusal of the application are now superseded. The Council advise that these policies are replaced by Policies LP25 and LP62 of the new Local Plan. The appellant was given the opportunity to comment.
4. The reason for refusal refers to the Bracknell Forest Borough Parking Standards approved July 2007. However, the Council's current Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the document I have been provided with, is dated March 2016.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on highway safety.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is part of a 1990s housing estate. Like many of the properties, No.8 Atte Lane had an attached garage to the side. It shares a driveway with No. 6, with the garages linking the detached properties. A

- planning condition on the approval for the housing estate restricts the conversion of the garage.
7. The appellant advises that the garage was not previously used for parking and has also provided data from a survey with neighbours (21 participants) in which the majority of the respondents indicated that they use their garage for storage rather than parking, with various comments advising that it is too small for a car. The dimensions of the garage are below the Council's current requirements as set out in the Parking Standards SPD March 2016. Nonetheless, it is a size that could accommodate a small car, which is confirmed by the appellant's survey, with a couple of respondents indicating (even if occasionally) that they park a car in the garage.
 8. The SPD (paragraph 3.3) explains that *where an application is to extend a dwelling and the existing dwelling has a garage secured under a previous planning permission, it will count as 1 parking space*. The garage conversion reduces the defined parking spaces at the 3-bedroom property from 2 to 1 space. The drive is insufficient to accommodate two vehicles without overhanging the pavement and is located at a point where Atte Lane changes to a shared surface and at the junction with Hemmyng Corner.
 9. Throughout the estate opportunities for on-street parking are limited with only a small number of parking bays along the roads. When I visited the site, in the middle of the day, numerous vehicles were parked partially on the footpath or grass verges restricting the free flow of traffic and conflicting with the use of the footways. Whilst this is an existing situation, removing the availability of parking within the garage has the potential to increase the risk of inconsiderate or obstructive parking to the detriment of highway safety. The number of properties beyond No.8 is limited but this does not justify restrictions to pedestrian movements or risks to safety.
 10. Whilst I acknowledge that the size of the garage and lack of ground floor toilet facilities do not reflect the current provisions, the property would have been built to accord with those at that time. I understand the appellant's frustrations in that regard and that a ground floor bathroom would aid convenience and accessibility for the occupiers. There is however no detailed evidence before me of a specific requirement, and therefore this is a matter to which I can only give limited weight. Accommodating a second car on the drive, or on-street parking would potentially interfere with other road users and, as such, the arrangements do not accord with the Council's SPD and fail to demonstrate that the safety of all highway users, including pedestrians, would be ensured.
 11. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies LP25 and LP62 of the Local Plan which require development to prevent, minimise and mitigate negative impacts on the transport network and road safety, and provide appropriate levels of parking. There would also be conflict with the SPD, and Policy WNP15 of the Warfield Neighbourhood Plan which requires compliance with the Council's parking standards.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out and having regards to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR