



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2024

by G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/W/24/3336274

7 Ridleys Piece, South Warnborough, Hook, Hampshire RG29 1RL

- 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 VIVID Housing Limited against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/01295/FUL, dated 14 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is for the change of use of the land to create ten car parking spaces within a residential cul de sac.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description above is taken from the Council's decision notice as it more accurately and concisely describes the development, excluding the reasons for the proposal which formed part of the description on the application form. Notwithstanding this, both the appellant, in their Design and Access Statement, and the Council's proposal, in the officer's report, refer to the provision of ten car parking spaces. This reflects the number of spaces shown on the plans which would be created within the area of the existing grass verge. Whilst other parking areas are shown these are on the road, and, therefore, I have amended the description from eleven to ten spaces.
3. As part of the appeal, the appellant has proposed deleting the spaces identified as S2 and S15 on plan 1470-23 004e and suggests that the surfacing material is Grasscrete or similar. The Council has confirmed that they have no objection to these changes but maintain their concerns to the development. I consider the implications of these amendments as part of my considerations below.
4. The decision notice refers to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), but the relevant paragraph numbers do not correspond with the latest version– December 2023. The Council have confirmed that paragraphs 110(b)(c) and 111, are now 114 (b)(c) and 115, respectively. It is only the numbering of those paragraphs, not the content, which has been revised.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

6. Riddleys Piece is a cul de sac of semi-detached houses and bungalows. The road is limited in width and the only road markings are a hatched square at the end of the road. An area of parking with garages is located on the northern side of the road, adjacent to No.20, and to the southern side, in front of Nos. 7-10, is a large grass verge. The verge hosts an oak tree enclosed by fencing towards the southern end, and a driveway to No.8 also dissects the space.
7. Opportunities for on-street parking are limited. When I visited the site, during the day, a couple of vehicles were parked on the road in the area denoted as S11 on the application plans and within the turning head at the end of the road. From the information before me, including photographs and representations from residents and the parish council, parking is an issue with vehicles parking on the grass verge and in other locations which obstruct access and has created tension.
8. The proposal would provide additional parking spaces including a disabled space. The majority of the existing verge would become parking bays with an area around the existing oak tree retained, which relates to the root protection zone. However, the proposed layout does not fully correspond with the situation on the ground, including the existing driveways or the depth of the verge. Additionally, there is no tracking information to show that all of the parking spaces are accessible, or that the arrangements would not interfere with other road users, including potential emergency vehicles, which require access and turning facilities. The Council identified various restrictions to the positioning, accessibility and dimensions of the spaces, which do not accord with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document – Cycle and Car Parking in New Development adopted in December 2023 (SPD) and Manual for Streets. While the proposed deletion of spaces S2 and S15 would aid access to the adjoining spaces, there is insufficient evidence before me to indicate that the proposal would provide for the safe manoeuvrability of vehicles and protect other road users.
9. I recognise that residents' parking requirements have changed since the properties were built, and residents include those with mobility and other disabilities. Additionally, inconsiderate parking is currently taking place and the utilisation of the verge allows for the parking capacity to be increased and the spaces to be defined. Details of the materials, of a porous form, could be secured by condition and a grasscrete type surface would reduce the visual prominence of the parking. Notwithstanding this, the deletion of the two spaces (only one of which forms part of the ten spaces proposed within the verge area) is insufficient to provide certainty that the parking arrangements would facilitate safe and suitable access for all users of Riddleys Piece.
10. Overall, the scheme fails to consider the relationship with the existing environment comprehensively nor adequately demonstrates that there would be no harm to highway safety. The development as proposed would therefore conflict with policy INF3 of Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 which supports safe, suitable and convenient access, compatible layouts for all users, and parking provisions which accord with the SPD. There would also be conflict with the related requirements of the Framework – paragraphs 114 (b) (c) and 115.

Other Matters

11. The Council also raised concerns with regard to flood risk. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and the appellant, as part of the appeal, accepts the use of a permeable surface material. Further details of the materials and surface water drainage could be secured by condition. However, as I have found against the scheme on the main issue, this matter is not determinative.

Conclusion

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

G Ellis

INSPECTOR