
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/24/3340587

31A Banstead Road, Caterham CR3 5QH

- 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 D Bhatia against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application reference is TA/2023/1515.
 - The proposal is for conversion and extensions of the first floor flat, external balcony and roof space at 31A Banstead Road to create three new apartments (net increase of 2).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. My attention has been drawn to the extensive planning history of the site, including previous appeals on the site that were allowed and dismissed for different schemes. I shall have regard to this background when considering the merits of this proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the development on parking provision in the area having regard to highway safety, residential amenity and the layout of spaces.

Reasons

Parking provision

4. The appeal site relates to a two-storey property on the corner of the junction between Banstead Road and Oak Road, in a relatively high-density, urban setting. The appeal proposal would result in five flats within the building, a net increase of two units, with provision made for the parking of two vehicles in the yard at the rear.
5. Banstead Road is a busy arterial route and Oak Road a quieter residential thoroughfare. At the time of my visit, on a Tuesday morning, there was limited availability for on-street parking close to the appeal site. Whilst I accept this is only a snap shot in time, it is an indication that on-street parking is difficult to achieve at certain times of day. I also note that there are no restrictions by way of permits, time limits or a pay and display regime. However, there dropped kerbs and yellow lines on local roads, which limit opportunities for on-street parking.

6. Oak Road in particular is narrow, and as such any increased on-street parking in the immediate proximity to the site would be likely to result in the road becoming difficult to navigate, which would cause an obstruction for users. Moreover, the restricted highway already encourages vehicles to park on the pavement to allow the free-flow of traffic. This causes a problem for pedestrians who may have to walk in the road; an increase in parking would aggravate this hazard.
7. I appreciate the current arrangement in that there is no on-site car parking for the existing flats on site, and none is required in terms of the permission previously granted; in essence this would mean no off-street parking for three units. Taking into account the requirements of the Council's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2012 (SPD), this is a shortfall of between 4.5 and 6 spaces depending on allocation.
8. However, the appeal scheme would result in a material worsening of the situation. Whilst two off-street spaces would be provided, overall the shortfall for the proposal would be between 5.5 and 8 spaces, depending on allocation. Even allowing for flexibility given the proximity of the site to bus stops, shops and services, this is a substantial deficiency.
9. Moreover, although there may be public transport available, it cannot be presumed that all future occupiers would not own vehicles. Whilst there would be 2 off-street parking bays, this would not necessarily accommodate all the development's parking requirements, which in turn would increase the likelihood of on-street parking in the neighbourhood and the highway risks associated with it. I acknowledge the appellant's photographic evidence however this, if anything, demonstrates that on-street parking the area should not be exacerbated further. I carried out my visit during a quieter period of the day and I am not satisfied that Oak Road could accommodate any additional increase in parking demand without causing potential highway safety and reducing the free flow of traffic, even during the quieter daytime periods.
10. If the development were permitted any future residents of the proposed development would be placed in the unsatisfactory position of having to park on street in an area of parking stress, with the harmful impacts on safety this would entail, including reduced visibility for pedestrians and congestion. Moreover, the lack of on-site parking could result in occupants having to park some distance from the flats thus leading to a temptation to park inconsiderately closer to the site. It would also result in additional vehicular movements in the area as they search for vacant spaces, and the situation would be aggravated particularly if the residents had visitors.
11. In respect of the arrangement of the spaces within the rear yard, I am aware that manoeuvres across the public footpaths into and out of local accesses are a common feature, although these are generally approached with caution. Given the infrequency and short duration of such manoeuvres and the low speeds involved, I consider that highway safety would not be unduly compromised in this particular instance.
12. In summary, whilst the layout of the parking for vehicles within the appeal site would be acceptable, the number of spaces would be insufficient and this would give rise to prejudicial conditions to highway safety and residential amenity. Consequently, the scheme would contravene Policy CSP12 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy 2008 and Policies DP5 and DP7 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014 and the SPD. Collectively, these seek

to secure the amenities of the future occupants of development and those enjoyed by nearby and adjacent properties having regard to highway safety, traffic generation and to provide parking in accordance with parking standards. The proposal is also inconsistent with the advice the National Planning Policy Framework, which advocates that development should not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Other considerations

13. I acknowledge that the scheme offers a dwelling mix which is appropriate for the context, and goes towards meeting the District's current and future housing needs. Furthermore, the proposed roof extension is considered to be appropriate in terms of its massing, scale, height and overall design and would not result in a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the established street scene or the wider area. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified above.

Conclusion

14. Having regard to all matters put forward and accounting for the preceding arguments, I dismiss the appeal.

C Hall

INSPECTOR