



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/D/24/3348366

32 Boundary Drive, Slough, SL2 4FQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Ahmed Shirzey against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is P/17878/001.
 - The development proposed is garage conversion to habitable room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application was made retrospectively. At the time of my visit the conversion of the garage to a habitable room used as a study was complete.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development upon highway safety and free flow of traffic, with particular regard to parking provision.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached, four-bedroom dwelling with an original detached garage to the side and rear with two tandem parking spaces on a hardstanding in front. Similar arrangements are mirrored by other properties along Boundary Drive. The property is part of a modern residential estate of 104 two, three and four-bedroom houses that was granted planning permission in 2016 (Ref P/16006/000). Condition 27 of the planning consent restricted the use of all garages on the site for car parking only. The garage at No 32 has been converted into habitable accommodation, currently used as a study to facilitate home working according to the appellant's submissions.
5. There is no dispute between the parties that the original garage was of a size suitable to accommodate a parked vehicle and thereby qualify as a usable parking space. Neither is there any dispute that the Council's car parking standards require three parking spaces for a four-bedroom dwelling within a predominantly residential area. The property currently provides two parking spaces in front of the former garage and thereby falls short of the Council's normal parking requirements.
6. Boundary Drive is part of a large cul-de-sac estate with properties arranged around a loop road with a single point of entrance and egress along Century Lane from

Wexham Road. The appellant has argued that the property is in a highly accessible location. I accept that Slough offers all the services required for day-to-day living but the appeal property sits a considerable distance north of the town centre in a fringe urban location. Although there is a bus stop within reasonable walking distance along Wexham Road, I have not been provided with any information regarding bus frequencies or routes. Neither is there any other evidence presented to demonstrate that the location is readily accessible by other alternative means to the car. I am not persuaded by any information provided that the level of off-street parking deemed necessary to serve the estate when it was developed, as recent as it was, was excessive or unreasonable, or that it does not remain to be so. Based on this, I consider that the converted garage at No 32 has the potential to displace an off-street parked vehicle.

7. Boundary Drive has a narrow, block paved road surface with clearly defined kerbs and black-topped walkways either side adjoining the properties' shallow garden frontages. Despite the absence of any enforced parking control, it struck me as a tightly enclosed and intimate space designed purposefully for cars to be parked in garages provided and other off-street spaces rather than along the roadside. As such it resembles precisely the type of development referenced within paragraph 2.83 of The Local Plan for Slough - March 2004 (LP), where it points out that such schemes usually have restrictive planning conditions preventing the change of use of garages to habitable rooms or any other use. LP Paragraph 2.84 goes on to say that it is the Council's policy to oppose the loss of garages in those circumstances where planning permission is required to remove a restrictive condition.
8. During my visit I was further struck by the number of vehicles that were parked on the carriageway mid-day, in every case over the width of the pavements on both sides, obstructing their possible use and necessitating the diversion of any pedestrians onto the road's surface. I further observed some residents' own attempts to deter such parking through the display of informal signage of their own. Whilst just a snapshot in time, it is reasonable to assume that more cars would return to their home destinations during the evenings, some parking on the provided off-street spaces, but others on the road. Given the narrow width of the carriageway, this would almost certainly be across the pavements to avoid blocking the flow of vehicles.
9. Any vehicle displaced at No 32 would be likely to park on-street. I saw no other potential options within reasonable proximity of the appeal property. By failing to satisfy the Council's parking standards the development would not make provision for parking at the appeal property appropriate to the specific circumstances of its location. For the reasons I have outlined, this would contribute further to an already congested and poorly parked environment, and one where safe pedestrian flow is already frequently hampered and put at risk. This would be detrimental to the safety of highway users and potentially to the free flow of traffic in the area. As such, there is conflict with LP saved Policy T2 (*Parking Restraint*) and the National Planning Policy Framework which together seek to ensure that highway safety is secured for users of new and existing development. The adverse visual impact from vehicles parked on the road and pavements upon the environment and residents' amenities, which Policy T2 also seeks to protect, adds further to my concerns.
10. The appellant has argued that the original condition restricting use of the garage for purposes other than parking is unenforceable and thereby flawed. I disagree.

Whilst no perceptible alterations have been made to the front elevation of the garage in this instance, a simple inspection of the building would reveal its use and purpose.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR