



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 September 2024 by S Indermaur

Decision by Chris Forrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/24/3346620

17 Starling Way, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 5DQ

- 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 Mark Brocklebank against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00632/HOU.
 - The development proposed is a garage conversion into partial habitable accommodation (office and play room).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a garage conversion into partial habitable accommodation (office and play room) at 17 Starling Way, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 5DQ and in accordance with the terms of application 24/00632/HOU subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Site Block Plan, Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Proposed Elevations.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area having particular regard to the possible displacement of parked cars onto the public highway.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located in a mainly residential area, albeit there are some leisure and commercial properties nearby. The appeal property itself is a semi-detached 3 bedroomed two storey dwelling with an attached garage with parking spaces between it and the highway boundary. There is also a parallel parking bay within the highway opposite the appeal property.
5. The Council has highlighted Policies INF3 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (LP) which require all development include sufficient well-designed facilities for parking and proposals to provide appropriate parking

provision in accordance with the Council's parking standards. In addition to these policies, the Council has also made reference to the guidance set out within the Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD (2023) (CCPSPD), and in particular the required dimensions for spaces, and the relevant parking standards for dwellings with differing numbers of bedrooms.

6. Despite the conversion of the garage being indicated to be for use as a study, the Council consider that there is the potential for it to be used as a 4th bedroom, as it would be of a sufficient size and dimension to be regarded as a single bedroom when applying the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) 2015. However, from the evidence before me, one of the existing bedrooms is below the standards set out in the NDSS. Therefore, if those standards are applied there would not be a net increase in the number of bedrooms at the appeal property.
7. Notwithstanding the above, as I understand it, the garage was originally considered to be a parking space when the house was granted planning permission meaning that three parking spaces were provided. Therefore, given the garage would be converted to living accommodation that space would be lost.
8. That said, in assessing the proposals against the current parking guidance, a single garage is not now regarded as a parking space, meaning that the appeal property is already reliant on its existing driveway and street (unallocated) parking to service the dwelling.
9. The Council consider that the existing driveway parking spaces do not conform to the current design standards as set out on the CCPSPD. Be that as it may, the parking spaces were deemed acceptable at the time of the original planning permissions and given that no changes are proposed in this respect (or in relation to the number of bedrooms which may increase parking space demand), I consider that the existing on-site provision is adequate for its intended purpose and demand should the appeal be allowed.
10. In addition to the above, I am conscious that the CCPSPD sets out that the parking standards are neither a maximum nor minimum but a guide as to the appropriate quantum of parking to be provided. Furthermore, whilst the CCPSPD sets out that rooms which could be used as bedrooms will be treated as such for the purposes of applying parking standards unless it is clear from any supporting evidence that the room is unlikely to be used as a bedroom. The appellants submission makes this very clear that this is not the intention, and I have no reason to disagree with that view.
11. Even if this was not the case, the Appellant has provided evidence to indicate that if there were to be some additional on-street parking the parking bay opposite the site does not appear to be heavily utilised and there is no evidence of parking stress in the area. This also weighs in favour of the proposal.
12. Taking all of the above into account, the proposal would not result in increased parking demand, or the need for additional parking spaces to be provided. Given this, there would not be any displacement of car parking onto the public highway and therefore it follows that there would be no discernible impact on the spacious suburban character of the area.

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13. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would not result in the displacement of cars onto the public highway and as a result would not have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would accord with Policies INF3 and NBE9 of the LP which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that developments positively contribute to the overall appearance of the area and provide appropriate parking provision.

Conditions

14. Other than the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the reason of certainty.
15. The Council requested a condition to retain parking spaces and to keep them available at all times. However, the proposal does not affect the existing driveway and the Council have indicated that condition 4 of the Reserved Matters approval for the dwelling requires that the parking facilities are permanently retained free of any impediment to intended use. Therefore, there is no need to impose a new condition on this permission as the original condition still applies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. The proposal would not conflict with the development plan read as a whole. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

S Indermaur

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence, and my representative's report, and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR