



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 May 2025

by **J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1590/D/25/3361553

181 Westbourne Grove, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea, SS0 9TX

- 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 Miss Caroline Slater against the decision of Southend-on-Sea City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01550/FULH.
 - The development proposed is to install vehicle crossover onto Westbourne Grove.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have used the Council's description of the development in the above banner heading as it concisely summarises the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on highway and pedestrian safety.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a two-storey end of terraced dwelling located on the western side of Westbourne Grove. Whilst Westbourne Grove is a long road comprising of various types of housing, the appeal site is located in a stretch of the road containing mostly of terraced dwellings of a similar design and appearance which sit behind shallow front gardens.
5. Westbourne Grove is a classified road (A1158) which, from my observations during my site visit, carries a steady amount of one-way traffic travelling north to south at moderate speed.
6. The proposed vehicular crossover would have a width of 4.5m and would serve a driveway measuring about 6.9m wide by 2.8m deep. A section of wall and hedge to the front of the dwelling would be removed to create a 3.15m opening.
7. The Council's Vehicle Crossover Policy (2021) (VCP) sets out technical specifications for new crossovers, including minimum dimensions for parking areas. The proposed parking area does not meet the 3.8m depth required for parallel parking as set out in the policy document. Whilst not forming part of the development plan, the VCP seeks to ensure that enough space for movement

within sites is provided to ensure the safety of other road users and minimise interference with pedestrian and high movement.

8. The appeal site is on a stretch of Westbourne Grove south of its traffic light junction with Fairfax Drive. I noted at my site visit that this particular stretch of the road was heavily parking, with many vehicles parked partly on the pavement on both sides of the road. Whilst only a snapshot in time, given the tight urban environment, high levels of on-street parking is likely to be a regular occurrence.
9. The parking that occurs already impedes the space on the pavement for pedestrians. From my observations, few dwellings close to the appeal site benefit from off-street parking, other than the occasional end of terrace with a driveway to the side leading to a parking space at right angles to the road. Pedestrians would not therefore necessarily anticipate vehicles to be manoeuvring across the pavement. Parked vehicles in close proximity to the proposed driveway would be likely to impede the visibility a driver manoeuvring into the space would have of other road users, including other vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Given the shallow depth of the parking space, it is likely that several manoeuvres may be required to satisfactorily access and park within the space, thereby causing possible danger and inconvenience to pedestrians and other road users.
10. I accept that there are examples where the Council has applied the VCP flexibly, including at 120 Westbourne Grove further to the south of the appeal site. However, this example relates to a bungalow with a wider frontage and a driveway depth of 3.6m, falling only slightly short of the Council's standards.
11. Other examples are provided of various crossovers that have been approved along Westbourne Grove. However, Westbourne Grove is a long road, with various stretches comprising dwellings of a markedly different character and appearance to that of the appeal site. Some of the examples cited are within sections of Westbourne Grove which benefit from single yellow lines to restrict parking and are more spacious in terms of their layout, with dwellings set behind generous frontages making it easier to safely accommodate parking spaces and associated vehicle crossovers. I am not aware that any of these examples are directly comparable to the appeal proposal, and in any event, I am required to determine the appeal on its own merits.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on highway and pedestrian safety. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CP3 of the Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM1 and DM15 of the Development Management Document (2015). Collectively these policies seek to ensure that development is well designed; makes effective use of land whilst being compatible with its surroundings; contributes towards highway safety and ensures safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians. It would also conflict with the guidance, aims and objectives set out in the Councils VCP.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that the Council raised no objection to the proposal on the grounds of its effect on the character and appearance of the area, or in respect of its effect on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers. I also note that the appellant would be willing to provide replacement landscaping. The proposal would also allow for the installation of an electric vehicle (EV) charging point which is a positive aspect

of the proposal. However, these considerations do not outweigh my concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR