



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/25/3367161

15 Reynolds Street, Fleet GU51 1LG

- 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 Stephen Mott against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00115/HOU.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of garage into habitable accommodation to include alterations to windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The development has been implemented, and therefore, this is a retrospective proposal, and I have dealt with it on that basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located within the Elvetham Heath estate. A planning condition on the approval for this part of the housing estate requires garage(s) and parking space(s) not to be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.
5. 15 Reynolds Street is part of a terraced row of properties and has, what was, a single garage to the side with a driveway sufficient for one vehicle in front. The appellant advises that they have not used the garage for parking and refers to the Council's Cycle and Car Parking Standards in New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (December 2023), which indicates that a single garage is not regarded as a parking space. Nonetheless, as I understand it, the garage was originally intended to serve as a parking space, meaning that the property had two parking spaces.
6. The Council's current parking standards, as set out in the SPD, provide guidance and are not maximums or minimums. The SPD does, however, explain that they are reflective of car ownership levels in the District, and that providing sufficient car parking is consistent with objectives for modal shift. It also advises that a single

garage can provide useful space for a variety of other transport options (cycles, mobility scooters, etc).

7. Whether the garage is used for parking is the occupier's choice, but future residents may have different requirements. It is suggested that the garage was not wide enough for a car, and whilst reference is made to a restricted entrance, at 3m x 6.2m (as indicated on the plans), it was not a small garage. It is wider than a parking space and was deemed a sufficient size at the time the planning permission was granted, with its use conditioned.
8. The development increases the living space and leaves the property with a single parking space. While acknowledging that the third bedroom is of a size below the Nationally Described Space Standards for a single bedroom, and that the converted garage space has been subdivided and is being utilised as an office and gym area, the provision of one parking space is below the parking standards for even a two-bedroom property.
9. Any additional parking requirements, over the single space, would be displaced to the street. Outside the property is a layby that provides parking for one vehicle and is one of three laybys along Reynolds Street, which provide unallocated parking for any residents/visitors. From my observations, further parking along the street and the surrounding roads is primarily achieved with cars parking half on, half off the pavement to ensure that traffic is not restricted. This, however, impedes pedestrians and other movements, and creates particular difficulties for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs. The parked vehicles also visually impact the appearance of the street and the wider area.
10. The appellant has provided a parking stress survey as part of a highway report to demonstrate that alternative parking is available. However, many of the areas noted for parking are such indiscriminate provisions, partially on the footway. The survey also includes availability along Elvetham Heath Way, which, whilst not demarked with any restrictions and no parking was observed, is the main route for traffic through the estate. The survey was only provided as part of the appeal; therefore, the Council has not had an opportunity to comment, and the methodology does not fully reflect the guidance in the SPD (Appendix 6), having only been undertaken on two weeknights. Given these limitations, I can only give the findings limited weight.
11. Reference is made to another appeal decision - APP/N1730/D/24/3346620. Whilst also within Hart District and the decision makes specific comments in relation to the SPD requirements, the location of the development is different. Moreover, the Inspector found that the existing on-site provision was adequate, which is not the case here.
12. I have also been referred to a number of examples in the locality where the Council has granted permission for a garage conversion. The full details are not before me, but these do not appear to be directly comparable, as they relate to different house types, part conversions, double garages, and/or greater on-site parking provision. During my visit to the area, I observed no obvious signs of widespread conversions, with garage doors still in place, and each proposal is to be considered on its own merits.
13. The physical change to the property with the provision of the window does not adversely affect the appearance of the property, and in itself, does not result in a

highway safety issue. However, the loss of the garage reduces the potentially available parking for occupiers, with displacement to the street. It has not been adequately demonstrated that this can be accommodated without adversely impacting other road users and the character and appearance of the area.

14. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with criteria f) and g) of policy NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (Local Plan), which require sufficient well-designed facilities for parking, taking account of the need for good access for all users and the design of external spaces. There would also be conflict with Local Plan policy INF3 and the SPD in terms of parking provisions, promoting sustainable transport and prioritising walking.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out, the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR