



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2025

by P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/25/3363060

Milestones, Pyrford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8UP

- 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 K Parmar against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2023/0280.
 - The development proposed is described as alterations to existing HMO, changing from 9 occupancy to 10 occupancy.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr K Parmar against Woking Borough Council. This application is subject to a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have used the description of development provided within the application form in the banner heading above. However, I have removed any wording which in itself does not relate to acts of development.
4. The description of development seeks to change the occupancy from 9 people to 10 people. However, in following the planning history for the site, no change of use appears to have applied for the use of the building as a large house in multiple occupation (HMO) (sui generis use). On this basis, I have considered in my assessment that the occupation of the property is no more than six residents.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for existing and future occupiers, with regard to internal communal space;
 - the effect of the proposal on the parking conditions in the area; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and of the area.

Reasons

Living conditions

6. The Private Sector Property Amenity Standards Guide 2022 (the Guide) provides guidance on the minimum room sizes for different levels of HMO occupancy. While this Guide does not form part of the Development Plan, I have had regard to it because any application for an HMO licence would be assessed against these standards.
7. The proposed kitchen would have an internal floor space of approximately 11.7m², which is slightly larger than the recommended size of 11m² for 10 residents. The proposed communal living space, comprising the dining room and living room, at approximately 27.05m², would fall marginally below the 27.5m² recommended by the Guide.
8. The kitchen and living room would be open plan, which would result in the overall communal floorspace being acceptable. However, its proposed use by up to 10 adults likely undertaking competing activities including cooking and relaxing, would likely become congested and would be impractical. This in turn would strain the space and result in poor living conditions.
9. The Council sets out that, in accordance with the Guide, the proposal would need to include 5m of worktops, as well as 10m of wall units or 5m of base units. The proposed floor plans show that there would be very limited sections of worktops within the kitchen. The Council measures the worktops at approximately 2.1m, a figure that is not disputed by the appellant. The proposed worktop provision would therefore fall below the recommendation within the Guide.
10. Moreover, the space needed to accommodate the hobs, sinks and other appliances would limit the cupboard provision, and it is not clear from the evidence whether wall units would be provided. The plans do not clearly indicate where the fridge/freezers would be placed, and it is unclear where these would be accommodated. Furthermore, the utility room would be removed, and it is not known where the laundry facilities would be provided. Given the open space nature of the proposed layout, I cannot rule out that the provision of such facilities would infringe upon the living space, which in turn would harm the quality of the accommodation for occupiers.
11. In their Appeal Statement the appellant states that additional worktop and cupboard space of some 2.5m could be installed within the kitchen. While this would provide more space, I am not persuaded it would successfully overcome the harm to the living conditions of the HMO's occupiers as I have identified above.
12. Thus, the proposed development would fail to provide acceptable living conditions for existing and future occupiers, with regard to internal communal space. It would be contrary to Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012 (CS) and to Policy DM11 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2016 (DPD), which among other things seek to ensure that schemes provide good quality of accommodation and appropriate levels of private amenity space.

Parking conditions

13. The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (the SPD) sets out that sui generis uses should be subject to an individual assessment in relation to parking provision.
14. On my site visit I saw that properties along this part of Pyrford Road generally have off-street parking. The extension and amount of existing dropped kerbs therefore reduces opportunities for on-street parking. The existing driveway across the frontage of the property has capacity to accommodate three vehicles and I observed in my site visit that these spaces were all occupied. While the County Highway Authority did not raise an objection to the proposal, representations received from interested parties advise that, as existing, the site is generating a parking overspill onto the nearby roads.
15. The proposal does not seek to provide any additional parking spaces on site. While the appellant asserts that the existing spaces would be sufficient to meet the anticipated parking requirements, I have not been provided with robust evidence to support this claim. Further, while there are no parking restrictions in the vicinity, in the absence of compelling evidence demonstrating what the existing on-street parking levels are in the vicinity and what would be the parking needs associated with the proposal, it is not possible to ascertain whether any overspill could be safely accommodated on the surrounding streets, particularly noting the road layout in the vicinity of the site.
16. In terms of public transport accessibility, West Byfleet train station is situated at an approximately 25-minute walk from the site. There are bus stops in the vicinity, albeit the frequency of these services is somewhat limited in accordance with the submitted evidence. Still, while the availability of public transport links in the vicinity and the provision of secure cycle storage on site would undoubtedly contribute to reduce reliance on private car, I have insufficient evidence to show that parking provision would be appropriate for the proposed number of residents.
17. The appellant advises that tenancy agreements restricting car ownership would be utilised where appropriate and that the proposal would promote car-sharing schemes. However, limited details have been provided and therefore I cannot be certain how such measures would be delivered and therefore contribute to a reduction in car parking levels.
18. In light of the above, it has not been adequately demonstrated that the effect of the proposal on the parking conditions in the area would be acceptable. The proposal would therefore be contrary to CS Policy CS18 and to Policy BE2 of the Pyrford Neighbourhood Plan 2017 (NP), which among other things seek to secure the safe function of the local road network and require development proposals to demonstrate that they will not result in on-road parking to the detriment of highway safety.

Character and appearance

19. Milestones is a two storey semi-detached dwelling with six bedrooms with a garden to the rear and driveway across the frontage which provides for off-street parking. Milestones falls within a predominantly residential road, and the Council advises that the surrounding area is strongly characterised by single family dwellings, which is not disputed by the appellant. Generally, the properties in the

area have frontage parking and during my midweek morning site visit, I observed few cars parked on street, albeit I appreciate that this is a snapshot in time.

20. As I have found in relation to the main issue above, limited details have been provided in relation to parking provision, and therefore it is not known whether the proposal would lead to any overspill parking onto the nearby roads and, if so, to what extent. On this basis, I am unable to ascertain that the proposal would not detract from the surrounding character in this regard.
21. The proposal would include the increased use of the site as an HMO through its occupation by four additional individuals. Therefore, it would lead to an intensification of the building's use, as occupiers would be generally unrelated and would live independently of one another.
22. However, as a large property, a reasonable degree of daily activity would be expected from it, even if it were to be in occupation by a single family. Measured against the baseline of the existing HMO use for 6 people, the increase in occupancy would not be substantial. Although I have little doubt that the use of the premises would intensify, the effect of proposed number of additional individuals would be minor, and in this regard the proposal would not undermine the character of the site and of the wider area.
23. Given the above, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to CS Policy CS21 and to NP Policies BE1 and BE2, which amongst other things support development that maintains the character of the area and require developments to demonstrate that they will not result in on-road parking to detract from the character of the area.

Other Considerations

24. The appellant sets out that in accordance with a recent planning permission¹ the appeal dwelling could accommodate up to 12 occupants while remaining in single family use. However, there is no robust evidence before me to demonstrate the likely number of vehicles associated with such occupancy in comparison to that of the proposal. In addition, the use of the communal areas by a single family would likely be different to that of the proposal. On this basis, this permission carries limited weight in my consideration of this appeal.

Other Matters

25. The proposal would include the construction of a first-floor side extension and single storey rear extension which the evidence indicates would be similar to a scheme recently approved by the Council². The Council considers these extensions to be acceptable and based on the details before me, I see no reason to disagree with the Council's view on this matter.
26. The appellant asserts that the proposal would optimise the use of the building. However, I am not persuaded that the proposal is the sole means to achieve this.
27. The appeal site is located within the 400m to 5km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which is protected under the Conservation of

¹ LPA Ref PLAN/2022/1116

² LPA Ref PLAN/2022/1116

Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the regulations). In this regard, the parties agree that a legal agreement would be required to secure a mitigation payment in relation to the requirements set out in the Council's avoidance strategy, albeit no such agreement is before me. Nonetheless, regulation 63(1) of the Regulations indicates that the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposal. As the appeal is being dismissed on other grounds, it is not necessary to consider this matter any further.

Planning Balance

28. The proposal would increase occupancy of the existing HMO, cater to a broader spectrum of residents and would assist in meeting the needs of those seeking more affordable accommodation solutions. The proposal would extend and adapt an existing building, so the development could be delivered quickly. The future occupiers would also provide economic benefits to the local area once the development would be complete through their use of local shops and services. However, given the limited scale of the proposed development, taken together these benefits attract modest weight in favour of the scheme and do not outweigh the harm I have found in terms of living conditions of future residents, parking provision, and character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

29. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR