



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/W/25/3371125

Land to the rear of 142 Chesterton Road, Cambridge, CB4 1DA

- 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 De Luca against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00919/FUL.
 - The development proposed is conversion of the existing garage into a one-bed dwelling following subdivision of the residential plot, together with associated alterations - part-retrospective.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description refers to the development as part retrospective. For clarity, I have considered the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans and details.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, with particular regard to the adequacy of the garden area;
 - Whether the cycle storage arrangement would meet the needs of future occupiers and support sustainable travel.

Reasons

Living conditions

4. The rear courtyard garden would measure approximately 2 metres in depth and 5.3 metres in width. It would be enclosed on three sides by a close-boarded fence of around 3 metres in height, with the fourth side formed by the building itself. Its north to northwest orientation, combined with the height of surrounding built form would result in the space receiving little direct sunlight. These factors would contribute to a highly enclosed and overshadowed environment of constrained proportions.
5. While the appellant contends that the courtyard would be proportionate to the scale of the dwelling and capable of basic outdoor functions, its limited size, orientation, and degree of enclosure would severely restrict its usability and appeal. The space would not offer a comfortable or practical setting for sitting out, drying clothes, or incidental domestic storage. Its oppressive character and lack of sunlight would

diminish its value as a usable private garden space, undermining the quality of the living environment.

6. I therefore conclude that the development would fail to provide a pleasant or functional garden area, resulting in substandard living conditions for the occupiers. This is contrary to Policies 50, 52, and 56 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), which collectively seek the provision of usable and enjoyable outdoor space as an integral component of new residential development.
7. However, I do not share the Council's concerns in relation to internal light and outlook, given the height of the front window relative to the bin storage area and the large roof lantern at the rear.

Cycle storage

8. It is proposed that bicycles would be stored vertically on wall-mounted racks within the entrance hallway. This would compromise circulation space and require lifting bicycles into position, which would not be practical for all occupiers. In particular, it would disadvantage those with limited mobility or strength, and would fail to accommodate non-standard bicycles, such as adapted, passenger, or cargo carrying models.
9. The site's proximity to public transport and the city's cycle network supports the principle of car free development. However, these attributes also heighten the need for cycle storage that is convenient, inclusive, and capable of supporting everyday use. In a city where cycling is actively promoted and nearly 20% of all trips are made by bicycle, the ability to store and access bicycles easily and safely at home is not a peripheral consideration but a fundamental requirement of sustainable urban living. The proposed arrangement would not meet these needs and would deter use by those unable to lift or manoeuvre bicycles easily, contrary to the principles of inclusive design and the objective of encouraging active travel.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed cycle storage arrangement would not meet the practical needs of all occupiers and would undermine the development's contribution to sustainable travel and inclusive access. There is conflict with Policy 82 of the CLP which requires that cycle parking be accessible, convenient, and in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments (2010). The failure to provide suitable cycle storage would also weigh against the development in terms of its overall design quality and its ability to support modal shift away from car use.

Other Matters

11. Although the development has been promoted as car-free, I have not been provided with an appropriate mechanism, such as a planning obligation, to secure it as such. However, as the appeal is being dismissed for other reasons, it is not necessary to consider this matter further.
12. I have noted the concerns raised by third parties in relation to traffic, future uses, and restrictive covenants. However, given the appeal outcome, it has not been necessary to consider these matters in detail.

Planning Balance

13. There is no indication that the most important policies for determining the proposal are out of date for the purposes of paragraph 11d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not engaged.
14. The proposal would nevertheless provide an additional dwelling in an accessible location. It would make efficient use of previously developed land, and as a small-scale scheme, it could be delivered relatively quickly. These are benefits that align with objectives of the Framework, particularly in relation to boosting the supply of housing and encouraging sustainable patterns of development. However, the scale of the benefits arising from a single dwelling are modest and attract only limited weight.
15. Conversely, the poor quality of the garden space and inadequate cycle storage would result in unsatisfactory living conditions and a development that fails to meet the practical needs of its occupiers. This conflicts with Policies 50, 52, 56 and 82 of the CLP, and runs counter to the Framework's objectives of securing a high standard of amenity, promoting health and well-being, and supporting sustainable transport and inclusive design. The harm would be experienced directly by future occupiers and would undermine the development's ability to support sustainable lifestyles and inclusive access.
16. In this context, the harm identified carries significant weight and is not outweighed by the modest benefits of the scheme. The proposal would not represent sustainable development when assessed against the policies in the development plan and the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict.
18. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR