



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 February 2010

by **D R Cullingford BA MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

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Decision date:
5 March 2010

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/09/2118721

31 Russell Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1NS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is by Mr Mohan Thind against the decision of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- The application (ref: 09/1019/FUL and dated 30 April 2009) was refused by notice dated 6 July 2009.
- The development is described as 'conversion of terraced house into 2 flats'.

Decision

1. For the reasons given below, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I dismiss the appeal.

Reasons

2. The appeal property is a small terraced house amongst streets of similar dwellings on the outskirts of Stockton town centre; the only parking available is within the surrounding streets and alleyways. The proposal is simply to convert the house into 2 1-bedroom flats (one on each floor), although the submitted plans imply that the dwelling already provides accommodation for 2 separate households. I saw that cars were parked along most of the street at the time of my site visit (about mid-day), as well as in the side alleys and back lane. Indeed, the concern that the proposal would exacerbate existing parking problems is, essentially, why the Council have refused permission and believe that the scheme would be contrary to 'saved' policy GP1 and the guidance in SPD3 relating to parking provision. That is the issue on which this appeal turns.
3. The Council explain that this section of Russell Street, which serves about 20 dwellings, should accommodate about 30 vehicles in relation to the guidance in SPD3, whereas provision is available for roughly 10. The existence of such a shortfall is evident in the very few spaces available in the street or alleyways, in spite of the proximity of this place to the town centre. Clearly, the creation of an additional dwelling here could, in itself, exacerbate existing parking problems. But, perhaps more importantly, it would also serve as a precedent encouraging further conversions of these terraced dwellings, thereby accentuating the harmful effects of this proposal. The alleyway at the rear of the property cannot be guaranteed to offer parking space to prospective occupants as it is a public highway and already used for the parking of some vehicles. And, of course, it is not yet certain how the impending residents' parking scheme might operate. The school (across Sydney Street) was closed

for the half-term holiday when I visited the appeal site, but I think that it is likely to attract traffic at the beginning and end of the school day. I consider that the proposal would exacerbate existing parking problems and contravene policy GP1.

4. I have considered all the other matters raised. I note that the planning officer considers that the creation of an additional dwelling here would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity. I am not so sure. Neighbouring residents indicate that they have had to endure noise emanating from the appeal property or from houses in the vicinity converted into flats. The juxtaposition of kitchen and living rooms with adjacent bedrooms in small terraced properties like these can, in the absence of suitable sound proofing, result in serious and persistent disturbance. No sound proofing scheme is indicated here and, given the small size of these properties, I doubt that the installation of such measures would be straightforward. I am afraid that I find nothing sufficiently compelling to alter my conclusion that this appeal should be dismissed.



INSPECTOR