
PLANNING STATEMENT

CONVERSION OFR GHARAGE FOR
HABITABLE
USE

at

5 ATTE LANE
WARFIELD
BRACKNELL
RG42 2QQ



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19th October 2023

DOCUMENTATION

This report is to be read in conjunction with drawings 23/8AL/01.

BACKGROUND

The property is a 3-bedroom detached house built during the 1990's in an estate of properties built as part of a development by Bovis Homes.

The property has recently had the garage converted for habitable use. The current owners, Mr & Mrs Armstrong, contacted the planning department by phone and were advised that the work would not require planning approval as the work would fall within their Permitted Development Rights. Unfortunately, the advice given over the phone was incorrect as there is a planning condition on the original approval removing these rights, with specific reference to the garages on the wider development (reference Condition 22, planning reference 622097). Unfortunately, the current owner does not have a record of the person that they spoke to.

The council became aware of the contravention and a letter was served on Mr & Mrs Armstrong advising of the breach.

PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Table 6 of the council's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Standards makes for a minimum provision of 2 spaces for 2 and 3 bed units.

In Table 7 it defines the minimum size of a parking space as being 4.8m long x 2.4m wide. Within garages, it defines a minimum space of 7.5 x 3.5m, allowing for some storage. Where these figures are not met, then a relaxation of at least 6.0 x 3.0m is referred to. The minimum door width for the garage should be 2.4m.

Paragraph 3.2 states:

Garages will continue to be included in the standards provided that they meet minimum size requirements. A garage will only count as a full parking space if it is larger than previously prescribed. A garage built below the new standard but to at least the previous standard will count as 0.2 of parking space.

The current guidance acknowledges that modern cars are now much larger than they used to be and quotes a Land Rover Discovery being 4.8m long, 2.2m wide and 1.9m high and a Ford Focus being around 4.3m long and 2m wide.

The guidance does clarify that in the instance where an application is to extend a dwelling and the existing dwelling has a garage secured under a previous planning permission, it will count it as 1 parking space. This doesn't qualify, however, any minimum provision or whether the parking space is in fact useable.

PARKING PROVISION AND ORIGINAL GARAGE CONSTRAINTS

The original garage door was provided in a structural opening of 2165mm and with an internal width of between walls of 2600mm. Allowing for the frame, the width of the clear opening of the door would have been in the region of 2025mm. In both instances, the original garage dimensions fall far short of current parking standards.

As mentioned previously the majority of modern cars are now much larger and typically are around 2.0m wide, plus wing mirrors. While it would be possible at a very tight squeeze to drive a smaller car through the original garage doors with wing mirrors pulled in (or sacrificed if left out), even for a car of 1.9m width, would only leave around 350mm either side for a perfectly centrally parked car within the garage. This is insufficient to enable the door to be opened to allow egress from the car. Even a Mini Cooper has a width of 1967mm, including mirrors and 1756mm without, where it would be virtually impossible to egress the car without scraping the doors against the garage walls. I would suggest a minimum clear space of at least 500mm is required either side of the car.



Modern Mini Dimensions

There are of course smaller cars still available on the market, but they are no longer the norm and in practice, a garage of this size would not be suitable for parking.

The space at the front measures approximately 2.66m wide x 6.66 long (average) and will comfortably accommodate one large vehicle. If the use of a smaller car can be used to demonstrate compliance with the parking provision, then two smaller cars can indeed be fitted on the driveway, as demonstrated in the photo below.



Two Cars On Drive

It must also be noted that while extensive parts of the estate do not benefit from the ability to park on the street due to site layouts and driveway provision, No. 8 Atte Lane has on street parking facilities in very close proximity in both Atte Lane and opposite on Hemmyng Corner, as shown below.



Street Parking on Atte Lane



Street Parking on Hemmyng Corner

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the original garage space was of insufficient size and design to allow a standard modern car to be parked. Mr & Mrs Armstrong have discussed the situation with other neighbours on the estate and the vast majority of the estate do not use the garaging for parking. Based upon the council's own parking standards, it is clear that the original provision falls far short of current standard and the original garage was not fit for purpose.

It must also be stressed that part of the reason for the conversion was for Mr & Mrs Armstrong's medical needs, where a downstairs WC had become a necessity. Current standards would of course require a downstairs WC for new housing and while the WC provided is not necessarily compliant with Part M of the Building Regulations, it is nonetheless a facility that meets the needs of the current owner. The test is whether the provision of a ground floor WC takes precedence over the parking provision.

Parking is still available for a minimum of one large vehicle on the remaining front drive or two much smaller vehicles. There is also ample space for on street parking in close proximity.

Given that the original garage was of insufficient size to be utilised, the perceived loss of parking provision by the conversion of the garage has not been harmful to the locality in the wider context of the estates parking provision and general amenities.