

**4/02750/16/FUL - INSTALLATION OF 5 PARKING BAYS.
LAND OPP. 9 BODWELL CLOSE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP1 3RG.
APPLICANT: DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL - MISS G BARBER.**

[Case Officer - Amy Harman]

Summary

The application is recommended for approval.

The proposed development forms part of the Council's 'The Verge Hardening Project' that has highlighted and prioritised the areas of extreme parking stress in the Borough, checked the feasibility and cost effectiveness of parking schemes in those areas, and undergone a pre-application process to determine the most appropriate areas and methods to deliver the needed additional parking. The programme addresses areas where a lack of parking is having a detrimental impact on DBC Services, emergency services and community safety.

It is evident from both the aforementioned and the Officer's site visit that there is a clear need for additional off-street parking in the area. This application provides 4 net additional parking bays and this would be achieved in a way which retains the mature oak trees and some greenery within the road. It is considered that an appropriate balance is struck between meeting the parking needs of the area and protecting the visual amenity of the neighbourhood and as such, it is considered that the application complies with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy.

Site Description

The amenity grass which is the subject of this application is approximately 100 sqm in area and is located on the northern side of Bodwell close, Hemel Hempstead. The amenity green is situated within close proximity to the residential properties 1-9 Bodwell Close which are located to the north and north-east and south of the proposal area. A mature oak tree is situated to the south-west of the proposal site yet positioned within the same amenity green as the proposed parking area. The tree is not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order.

Proposal

It is proposed to convert part of the existing amenity green into a parking area comprising 4 bays. The application was originally for 5 bays however this has since been reduced to 4 in order to allow an 11 metre distance from the base of the oak tree to the nearest parking bay.

Vehicular access is proposed via existing concrete slab immediately adjacent to Bodwell Close. The new parking bays are to be laid in dense bituminous macadam.

Referral to Committee

The application is referred to the Development Control Committee as the applicant is the Borough Council.

Planning History

None

Policies

National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Adopted Core Strategy

CS1 - Distribution of Development
CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages
CS8 - Sustainable Transport
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design
CS12 - Quality of Site Design
CS13 - Quality of Public Realm
CS26 - Green Infrastructure
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction
CS31 - Water Management

Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 57, 59 and 116
Appendix 5 (Parking)

Summary of Representations

Hertfordshire Highways

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

The proposal would not have a material impact on the highway network and may reduce some of the on street parking that occurs at present.

The highway authority recommended the inclusion of Advisory Notes (AN) to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980.

Trees and Woodlands

After considering the revised proposals for 4 parking bays and having re-measured the diameter of the oak tree affected. The applicant has confirmed that they will allow a distance of 11 m from the base of the oak tree to the nearest parking bay. This is sufficient to protect the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the oak tree. No further comments.

Contaminated Land Officer

No comment

Response to Neighbour Notification / Site Notice / Newspaper Advertisement
None received

Considerations

Policy and Principle

The proposed development would take place in an urban area of Hemel Hempstead and would therefore be acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy.

This application is the subject of a two year process ('The Verge Hardening Project') that has highlighted and prioritised the areas of extreme parking stress in the Borough, checked the feasibility and cost effectiveness of parking schemes in those areas, and undergone a pre-application process to determine the most appropriate areas and methods to deliver the needed additional parking.

In accordance with policies CS11, 12 and 13, any scheme is expected, inter alia, to integrate with the streetscape character, preserve and enhance green gateways, avoid large areas dominated by parking, retain important trees or replace with suitable species if their loss is justified, avoid harm to neighbouring residential amenities and not compromise highway safety.

Furthermore saved Policy 116 of the DBLP and CS4 seek the protection of open land in towns from inappropriate development. In particular, the location, scale and use of the new development must be well related to the character of existing development, its use and its open land setting, while the integrity and future of the wider area of open land in which the new development is set must not be compromised. In this case the site is not designated as Open Land.

Saved Appendix 5 of the DBLP states that "achievement of parking provision at the expense of the environment and good design will not be acceptable. Large unbroken expanses of parking are undesirable. All parking must be adequately screened and landscaped".

Impact on Street Scene

The creation of 4 new parking spaces on an amenity green would result in a change to the appearance of the area. In particular the use of a hard surface would create a slightly harsher feel to the locality.

However, cars already park in the area to the front of the application site, which diminish the visual amenity of the area.

Therefore, on balance, it is considered that the proposed application represents the most appropriate way of achieving the parking spaces that are in very short supply in this locality. In addition it is considered that the provision of these spaces would not unduly harm the character and appearance of the area and as such the proposals comply with Dacorum Core Strategy Policies CS10, CS11 and CS12, as well as saved Policy 116 of the DBLP.

Impact on Trees and Landscaping

As previously discussed, there is a mature oak tree within close proximity to the proposed parking bays which could be affected or potentially affected by the proposals. Policy CS12 and saved Policy 99 seek to retain trees in new development or replace them with suitable species if their loss is justified under Policy CS12 and saved Policy 100. As such the application has taken into consideration the existing mature oak trees and has reduced the number of proposed bays from 5 to 4 to provide the appropriate 11 metres distance from the nearest bay to the trees.

In this case, the verge is not designated as open land, however the majority of the grass verge is to be retained. Therefore the proposal is considered to accord with saved Local Plan Policy 116/Policy CS4.

Impact on Highway Safety

The proposal would not have a material impact on the highway network and may reduce some of the on street parking that occurs at present, therefore it is considered that these proposals would improve highway safety in the street.

Impact on Neighbours

With regards to this planning application, all of the properties which are situated within close proximity to the site were consulted in writing, in addition to a site notice being placed adjacent to the site. No objections have been received by any of those who were consulted.

The proposals would expand an existing parking area, it is not considered that any harm caused to neighbouring residential amenities would be so significant to warrant refusing this application.

Sustainability

Under Policy CS29 and Para. 18.22 of the Core Strategy, completion of a sustainability statement online via C-Plan is a normal requirement. Whilst no statement has been submitted, given the minor nature of the development it is not considered that much further value would be added from the submission of such a statement in this case. However, further details have been requested regarding the sustainable drainage strategy for the parking area to minimise the impact of surface water run-off.

Conclusions

The proposed parking spaces would provide much needed local parking to provide these 3 parking bays to reduce inappropriate on-street parking on verges and so forth given the high demand for parking in the area. It has the support of the local community and would be achieved in a way that would not significantly compromise the visual amenity of the area. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant planning policy as detailed within the report.

Recommendation

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

RECOMMENDATION - That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons referred to above and subject to the following conditions:

- 1 **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:**

DBC/015/001

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives

Storage of materials AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Obstruction of the highway AN2) Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.