

Planning Standards for New Developments

Consultation Response from Ampthill Town Council

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To be considered by ATC on 14th Dec 2022

Summary:

Ampthill Town Council appreciates the thorough research-based approach to production of this document and is pleased to see parking provision guidance consolidated into a single SPD. Whilst supportive of the majority of recommendations, ATC have some concerns in relation to our local conditions and experience.

Sections 3 and 6 Cycle Parking at Residential and Non-Residential Developments

Ampthill Town Council are pleased to see standards being set for cycle parking provision, but wish to re-iterate that such provision at the home and destination needs to be supported with safe cycle routes between homes and desired destinations, which includes appropriate speed limits, signage, crossing places and dedicated or shared cycleways where viable.

4.4.1 Garages

We are pleased that single garages will no longer qualify as a parking space in new developments. However we query the use of the term “garage” for what will be an extra room in a property, or storage space. Additionally, the size difference between a “double garage” which only counts as one parking space, and a single garage with extra storage space which would allow for a car to parked inside should be clarified. We would suggest that specific dimensions are used to define whether a built structure can qualify as a parking space.

Section 4.5 Car Parking Standards for Residential Developments

Ampthill Town Council are happy with the space allocation change to being purely based on number of bedrooms in the new property as per Table 3. We would ask for clarity on the definition of “bedroom” as rooms can be defined as “Study2 or “playroom” or “home gym” but then used as a bedroom, increasing occupancy and potential car ownership.

4.5.2 3rd and 4th parking spaces

We are concerned that this allows provision of extra parking as “accessible land that could be converted to parking by the landowner”. Whilst understanding that this is an outcome of research showing that a relatively small proportion of households have more than two vehicles, we are concerned that allocation of green/open space to be converted will:

- not be converted, despite need for additional spaces, leading to increased on-street parking,
- lead to a reduction in garden space provision as the parking space “accessible land” allocation may be the only garden space for the property,
- be used without conversion leading to unsightly bare soil areas in frontage of properties
- mean that the allocated accessible land is available to be built on

4.8 Accommodation for Older People

ATC are happy to accept that facilities such as sheltered housing and assisted living complexes are appropriate to have a reduced parking allocation. However, independent living facilities described as “older persons accommodation” are usually described as for “Over 55s” which includes people with potentially many working years ahead prior to being of pensionable age and people who will continue to own and drive a vehicle potentially for 30 + years. We therefore would prefer that this type of accommodation is treated as any other communal residential accommodation.

General

ATC have been concerned at the dwelling density proposals for recent developments, with implications for parking provision being very likely to lead to overspill onto adjacent streets. We believe these parking provision proposals to be helpful and reasonable. Whilst understanding the need to make best use of development space, we would like to see these parking standards applied with resultant lowering of dwelling density on proposed developments.

Sustainability considerations

Whilst features such as permeability of driveway materials are covered in the CBC Design Guide, due to come out for consultation soon, we feel that this document could usefully make reference to potential utilisation of more environmentally friendly driveway surfaces – even if by incorporating some exemplar images, as the photos are exclusively of hard surfaced spaces.

Additionally, EV charging is entirely envisaged as the attachment of a vehicle to a wall by a wire. Reference could be made to parking spaces having wiring for EV Charging incorporated – this could be a simple gully for the wiring incorporated into the space, or ground level plug in points, or drive over charge pads. The sections on EV Charging Provision should have regard to the ways that this can be included within the parking space at the point of design and construction, not merely as a retrofit.