

Conversion of Car Ports and Integral Garages to Habitable Accommodation

1. Introduction

When originally designed the site layout for Port Solent made careful provision for car parking (both allocated and unallocated) in accordance with the car parking standards applicable at the time of Portsmouth City Council as the Local Planning Authority.

Planning “conditions” were attached to the grant of planning permission(s) for the development in order to ensure that space provided in car ports and integral garages would be retained for parking purposes.

Car ownership per dwelling has increased both nationally and locally since the completion of the development. There is now often evidence of localised car parking congestion and difficulties within parts of Port Solent.

Also, most residents do not use their car ports or garages for the parking of vehicles. This adds to the pressure on the unallocated, visitor and on-street parking spaces.

POSOL often receive representations/complaints from residents relating to car parking difficulties.

2. Response

The POSOL Board takes the view that the parking provisions planned with the development should not be diminished. This is reinforced by the planning conditions attached to the original planning permission(s).

Recent Government planning advice has recommended lower parking standards per residential unit and it is for this reason that recent planning applications to the Council to convert either car ports or garages to form additional habitable accommodation have not been resisted by Portsmouth City Council's Planning Committee. At Port Solent there is however a higher level of car ownership and usage which often leads to periodic localised car parking congestion resulting in ad hoc parking along the access roads etc.

It is for this reason that POSOL seeks to maintain, at least, the present car parking provision wherever possible in the interests of all residents whether owners or tenants.

3. Policy in respect of parking.

As a matter of principle it is therefore POSOL's policy is to avoid any loss of car parking resulting from the conversion of car ports and integral garages (to form additional habitable accommodation).

Applications to convert car ports to living space will be considered on their merits and POSOL will apply the following parameters when considering each application.

- a) After such conversion, there must remain not less than 7.8 metres of car parking space between the new car port rear wall and the end of the existing driveway. This is to the back edge of the PCC adopted pavement. The national standard length for a single car parking space is 4.8 metres. POSOL has taken the view that by adding an extra 3 metres, making a total of 7.8 metres, this will allow one medium sized car and one compact car to park nose to tail, thus preserving the planning requirement for two car parking spaces per house. This is a compromise, but one which POSOL feels is fair and reasonable for all
- b) The new rear wall of the car port must be a minimum distance of 1 metre back from the front outside edge of the house.
- c) Any windows or doors set into the new rear wall must be to a design approved by POSOL so full details should be included in your application papers. Photographs or brochures can be helpful here. As a guide, a single horizontal window, positioned at the top of the new wall and wholly above the top of the front door architrave is generally acceptable for off-set doors. For doors positioned centrally, a narrow glazing strip on each side of the door and incorporated into the door frame design again are generally acceptable. The objective is to minimize the visual impact of the change in order to preserve the original balanced design of the property.

This approach both retains POSOL's overall concerns regarding the car parking provision within the whole development whilst respecting the wishes of individual owners to carry out such work.

4. Policy in respect of appearance

- a) For mid terrace houses. POSOL houses would be almost devoid of features without the visual impact of carports. Any infill of the carport must be set back by at least 1 metre such as to retain the appearance of a carport.
- b) For end of terrace houses with a car port. The original developer built some end of terrace houses without a carport and in accordance with this precedent the above para 4a is not applicable to end of terrace houses. In

such instances any front door must be in a “porch” set back by at least 1 metre.

5. Conclusion:

It is the intention of the policy to be fair and reasonable to all owners, residents and tenants both in relation to retaining an adequate overall car parking provision and not objecting to proposed car port and garage conversions where no material harm would result to the collective interest of all Port Solent owners and tenants.

POSOL’s Covenants Working Group members are available for consultation and we encourage owners considering such conversion works to arrange a pre-application meeting, via the Managing Agent, to discuss a scheme prior to the submission of an application. This process can assist in identifying potential areas of concern (if any) before cost is incurred in commissioning architect’s drawings to be prepared.

Approved by the Board 22 January 2021