



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2025

by **A Wright BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/24/3348381

8 Wood Close, Salfords, Surrey RH1 5EE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Quantum Homes against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/00446/F.
 - The development proposed is alterations to existing dwelling and the erection of 2 detached dwellings and associated infrastructure, as amended on 05/03/2024, 17/05/2023, 02/06/2023, 03/08/2023, 04/04/2024 and 26/04/2024.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations to existing dwelling and the erection of 2 detached dwellings and associated infrastructure, as amended on 05/03/2024, 17/05/2023, 02/06/2023, 03/08/2023, 04/04/2024 and 26/04/2024 at 8 Wood Close, Salfords, Surrey RH1 5EE in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/00446/F, subject to the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal was originally described on the application form as 'alterations to the existing dwelling and the erection of 4 detached dwellings'. However, the proposal was subsequently amended and the banner above reflects the amended plans and the description of development on the appeal form and decision notice.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised, and the 2023 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results were published in December 2024. As these could affect the matters in this case, the Council and the appellant were invited to make further comments. I have taken on board the comments received where relevant.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a two storey hipped roof dwelling with a large side extension in a predominantly residential area. It occupies a substantial, triangular shaped corner plot that is significantly larger than other plots in Wood Close and the adjacent Harwood Park. The area is characterised by detached dwellings in varying plot sizes. The rear garden is largely enclosed by hedges, with a belt of trees along the rear boundary and a group of protected trees beyond. The proposal is to demolish the side extension and erect two detached two storey houses to the rear of the existing dwelling.
6. The proposed buildings would have substantial footprints, but these would not be dissimilar to the sizes of some other properties in Wood Close. Some sizeable houses on this street occupy much larger plots than proposed in the appeal scheme, and smaller existing plots generally accommodate buildings with a smaller footprint than the proposed dwellings.
7. Nevertheless, the plot analysis indicates that other houses in Wood Close and Harwood Park occupy between 23% and 39.5% of the plot on which they are situated, whereas the proposed dwellings would occupy under 23% of each plot. Whilst the new buildings would be juxtaposed at 90 degrees to each other, this is not an uncommon arrangement. As such, the appeal scheme would not cause a harmful erosion of spaciousness or appear as a cramped or overly intensive form of development.
8. The proposed dwellings would have a traditional appearance with hipped roofs and finished with a palette of traditional materials. The forwardmost parts of them would be a similar height to other properties in the vicinity. The parts of the proposed houses accommodating the garage and bedroom 1 would have lower eaves and ridge heights and be set back from the main face of the buildings, appearing subservient to them. The half dormers and roof features would be modestly scaled and, as such, would not significantly impinge on the roofs. Thus, due to their footprint and height relative to other properties nearby and their design, the proposed dwellings would not be harmfully out of scale in the vicinity.
9. A substantial area in front of the proposed new houses would be occupied by a turning head and parking spaces. However, front hardstandings for vehicle parking are already evident in the locality and most of the proposed hardsurfacing would be set well back from the road behind a gate, with the road access appearing as a small extension of the cul de sac. The bin collection point would also lie significantly back from the road. In addition, there would be space for soft landscaping beside these surfaced areas and large areas of the site would remain as gardens. For these reasons, the proposal would not appear significantly at odds with the landscaped garden character of the locality.
10. The Council's Local Character and Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021 provides an overview of the local character to help ensure that development is of a high quality which respects the character and appearance of its immediate vicinity and broad locality. For the reasons set out, the proposal would comply with this guidance.
11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would comply with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Reigate & Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan 2019 (DMP) where they require such developments to reinforce local distinctiveness

and respect the character of the surrounding area, including in relation to plot sizes, scale, height, bulk, mass and siting.

Living conditions

12. The proposed dwellings would be sited between existing properties at Wood Close, Harwood Park and Horley Lodge Lane.
13. The proposed access road and hardstanding would separate the new houses from the neighbouring property at 10 Wood Close (No 10). Whilst the development would be visible from the rear garden and rooms at No 10, due to the distance between the new buildings and the existing property, the scheme would not have an unduly overbearing effect on the occupiers of No 10 when using their rear rooms and outdoor space.
14. The front windows of proposed house 2 would obliquely face towards No 10. There would be some views of the neighbouring rear garden from the upper floors of both new dwellings, but the closest such openings would serve a walk-in wardrobe and an obscure glazed en-suite bathroom. Given the position and internal layout of the proposed buildings relative to No 10, the scheme would not cause harmful overlooking of the residents of this adjacent property.
15. Proposed house 2 would be around 13m from the dwelling at 19 Harwood Park (No 19), separated by a well-established hedge. The proposed buildings would be visible through the hedge in autumn and winter months and from some upper floor neighbouring windows. However, given that the closest views would be of the side elevation of proposed house 2 and in light of its distance from the neighbouring property, the scheme would not result in the harmful loss of outlook to the occupants at No 19.
16. The only upper floor opening on this side of plot 2 would be an obscure glazed bathroom window, and the upper floor windows on proposed house 3 would be much further away. As such, the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable loss of privacy to the residents of No 19.
17. Occupiers of other dwellings in the vicinity are also concerned that they would be overlooked or that the new buildings would have an unduly overbearing effect. There are also concerns about potential loss of light to neighbouring properties. However, due to the boundary planting, the proposed positions of the new houses and their distance from existing dwellings and gardens, there would be no harmful overlooking or loss of outlook or light to the occupiers of other properties nearby.
18. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook and privacy. It would accord with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the DMP where they require developments to not adversely impact upon the amenity of occupants of existing nearby buildings, including by way of overbearing, overlooking and loss of privacy.

Other Matters

19. The proposed housing scheme would be in an urban area where the principle of residential development is acceptable.
20. The proposal would result in seven trees being removed and two trees being pruned. The Council's Tree Officer considers that the scheme would achieve an

acceptable juxtaposition between the trees and the proposed new buildings and is satisfied that there would be no deterioration in arboricultural amenity and landscape value providing that appropriate tree protection methods are used. I have no reason to disagree. Conditions would secure the protection of retained trees and ensure that adequate replacement and new soft landscaping is planted on the site.

21. Various interested parties have raised concerns about the effect of the appeal scheme on ecology. Ecological assessments and surveys found moderate potential for bat roosts in a tree proposed to be retained and suitable habitats for several other species, particularly along the vegetated site boundaries. The appellant has joined the Council's District Licence Scheme to address impacts on great crested newts and/or their habitats. Surrey Wildlife Trust and the District Licencing Officer for Great Crested Newts do not object to the proposal subject to appropriate conditions. I agree that the imposition of these would ensure that species would be protected, and the scheme would achieve biodiversity net gain.
22. Interested parties are concerned that the proposal would lead to increased pressure on infrastructure. However, payment of the community infrastructure levy would ensure that a financial contribution is made towards the provision of facilities needed to support new development.
23. There are concerns about the impact of the proposal on drainage and flooding, but the lead local flood authority does not object and a suitably worded condition would ensure that a suitable surface water drainage scheme would be implemented, managed and maintained. There is no substantive evidence that the proposed scheme would cause subsidence or that suitable arrangements for sewage disposal could not be made.
24. A bin collection point would provide an appropriate refuse storage facility and would be within 25m of the road, meaning that it could be serviced from the highway, similar to neighbouring properties.
25. Interested parties have raised concerns about parking provision and impacts on the safety of road users. The proposed provision of five external parking spaces would meet the minimum parking standards for residential development set out in Annex 4 of the DMP. Further, there is no indication that emergency services would not be able to access the site in the event of a fire. The Highways Authority does not object to the scheme, and conditions requiring visibility splays and the laying out of vehicle parking and turning areas would ensure that it would not harm highway safety.
26. Any disturbance from construction works would be temporary, and legislation is in place to deal with statutory nuisance and unacceptable levels of noise. Further, the proposal is for two additional houses in an existing residential area, and the relatively minor increase in the use of the site would not cause unacceptable noise, health or security issues.
27. The new dwellings would have generous gardens, be well laid out, significantly exceed national floorspace standards, and provide habitable rooms well served by windows providing good outlook and light for future residents.

28. Concerns have been raised about harm to a Conservation Area, the Green Belt and countryside but the proposal would not affect any designated heritage assets and is not within the Green Belt or countryside.

Conditions

29. I have had regard to the Council's suggested conditions and considered them against the statutory tests outlined in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. I have made minor amendments, where necessary, to ensure that the conditions comply with the relevant tests. In the interests of precision, I have also combined some conditions relating to tree protection and landscaping and included access gates in the landscape condition. I have also added a condition relating to great crested newt compensation as the District Licencing Officer requires this to be included as part of the licencing scheme.
30. In addition to the standard time limit condition (1), I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans (2). This is in the interest of certainty.
31. A condition relating to external materials (3) is necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area.
32. Pre-commencement conditions requiring the provision of a surface water drainage scheme (4), hard and soft landscaping (5), tree protection (6), reptile precautionary method of working (7), and compliance with the district licensing scheme for great crested newts (8, 9 and 10) are necessary to ensure that suitable drainage measures are installed, the character and appearance of the area is protected, existing retained trees are safeguarded, and impacts on great crested newts are mitigated. The appellant has agreed to these.
33. I have imposed a condition requiring a biodiversity enhancement scheme (11) to ensure that the proposal provides ecological benefits.
34. Conditions requiring the provision of visibility splays (12) and space to be laid out for vehicles (13) are necessary in the interests of highway safety.
35. In addition, conditions relating to electric vehicle charging points (14), bike storage facilities (15) and a travel information pack (16) are required to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable forms of transport. Condition 16 accords with Policy TAP1 of the DMP where it encourages initiatives to increase travel by more sustainable options and help reduce the impact and frequency of travel by individual private car journeys to and from the development.
36. A condition requiring the provision of the bin collection point (17) is imposed to ensure that adequate waste facilities are provided. Further, a condition relating to water consumption (18) is necessary to ensure the efficient use of resources.
37. I have imposed a condition requiring the provision of high speed broadband (19) to ensure the development provides access to a high quality electronic communications network. A condition requiring a sensitive lighting management plan (20) is also necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area and ensure that protected species are not harmed.

- 38. Conditions restricting the future installation of windows on upper floors (21) and enlargements, roof additions and incidental buildings (22) are necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area and ensure satisfactory living conditions.
- 39. The Council suggested a condition requiring the provision of a pedestrian crossing point on Bonehurst Road A23. However, as the proposal is for two dwellings within a larger estate of houses, such a condition is not necessary or reasonable.

Conclusion

- 40. I conclude that the proposal would accord with the development plan and there are no material considerations that outweigh this finding. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed.

A Wright

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: J004279-DD-01; J004279-DD-02; J004279-DD-03; J004279-DD-04; J004279-DD-05; J004279-DD-06; J004279-DD-07; J004279-DD-08; J004279-DD-09 Rev G; J004279-DD-10 Rev I; J004279-DD-11 Rev B; J004279-DD-12 Rev B; J004279-DD-13 Rev D; J004279-DD-14 Rev C; J004279-DD-15 Rev D; J004279-DD-16 Rev D; J004279-DD-17 Rev C; J004279-DD-18 Rev D; J004279-DD-21 Rev C; J004279-DD-22; J004279-DD-23 Rev E; J004279-DD-25; 22-1477-TPP-H; Refuse Store Draft Distance plan dated May 2023; Harwood Park/Bonehurst Road Visibility Splays plan dated May 2023; and 8 Wood Close: Impact plan for great crested newt district licensing version 1 dated 14 March 2024.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as specified on the approved plans and in colours to match the existing dwelling. There shall be no variation without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.
- 4) No development hereby permitted shall take place until details of the design, management and maintenance of a surface water drainage scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDs, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the surface water drainage scheme for the site has been completed in accordance with the approved scheme. The surface water drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved scheme.
- 5) No development hereby permitted shall take place until details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:
 - all proposed and retained trees, hedges and shrubs, including proposed planting pursuant to approved plan J004279-DD-10 Rev I;
 - the proposed access gates;
 - an implementation programme; and
 - a maintenance schedule.

The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the agreed implementation programme.

All pre-planting site preparation, tree planting, tree positioning and tree maintenance shall be in accordance with British Standard 8545: Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – Recommendations, British Standard 4043: Transplanting root-balled trees, British Standard 4428: Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces), and British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (or equivalent British Standards if replaced).

Any trees, hedges or shrubs which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced within one calendar year to a planting specification which shall have been previously agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

- 6) No development hereby permitted shall take place until a final Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and a final Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These shall include details of:
- the specification of the tree protection barrier shown on approved plan 22-1477-TPP-H;
 - the location of service utilities relative to the root protection areas of all retained trees;
 - a pre-commencement meeting between the retained arboricultural consultant, the local planning authority's tree officer and the main contractor responsible for the implementation of the approved development; and
 - a scheme of monitoring and supervision by the retained arboricultural consultant.
- The approved TPP and AMS shall be adhered to throughout the construction period of the development.
- 7) No development hereby permitted shall take place until a reptile precautionary method of working has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved method shall be adhered to throughout the construction period of the development.
- 8) No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council's Organisational Licence (WML-OR146 or a Further Licence) and the proposals detailed on approved plan 8 Wood Close: Impact plan for great crested newt district licensing (version 1) dated 14th March 2024.
- 9) No development hereby permitted shall take place unless and until a certificate from the Delivery Partner (as set out in the District Licence WML-OR146, or a Further Licence) confirming that all necessary measures regarding great crested newt compensation have been appropriately dealt with, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the local planning authority has provided authorisation for the development to proceed under the district newt licence. The delivery partner certificate must be submitted to the local planning authority for approval prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved.
- 10) No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with Part 1 of the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Principles, as set out in the District Licence (WML-OR146, or a Further Licence) and in addition in compliance with the following:
- works to existing ponds onsite may only be undertaken during autumn/winter, unless otherwise in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Principles. Works which will affect likely newt hibernacula may only be undertaken during the active period for amphibians;

- capture methods must be used at suitable habitat features prior to the commencement of the development (i.e., hand/destructive/night searches), which may include the use of temporary amphibian fencing, to prevent newts moving onto a development site from adjacent suitable habitat, installed for the period of the development (and removed upon completion of the development); and
 - amphibian fencing and pitfall trapping must be undertaken at suitable habitats and features, prior to commencement of the development.
- 11) No development above ground level shall commence until a biodiversity enhancement scheme, informed by the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated 24th February 2024 and Bat Survey Report dated 23rd February 2024 and including an implementation programme, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This should be designed alongside the soft landscaping proposals for the site. The biodiversity enhancement measures shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme and the agreed implementation programme.
- 12) Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a plan showing 2m by 2m visibility splays onto Wood Close has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the visibility splays have been provided in accordance with the approved plan. The approved visibility splays shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m height above ground level and shall be retained as such thereafter.
- 13) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with approved plan J004279-DD-10 Rev I for vehicles to be parked and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. Thereafter, the parking and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for those purposes.
- 14) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until each of the proposed dwellings have been provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirements - 7 kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230v AC 32 Amp single phase dedicated supply) in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority and thereafter retained.
- 15) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with a revised scheme for proposed bike storage facilities with an electric bike charging point with timer function. Thereafter the bike storage facilities shall be retained and maintained for their designated purpose.
- 16) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a Travel Information Pack containing information on employment, education, retail and leisure land uses within 2km walking distance and 5km cycling distance of the site and details of public transport within 400 metres of the site and the destinations they serve including to the closest rail station to the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The

approved document shall be distributed to residents of each dwelling upon first occupation of each dwelling.

- 17) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the bin collection point has been provided in accordance with the details shown on approved plan J004279-DD-10 Rev I and thereafter the bin collection point shall be retained and maintained for its designated purpose.
- 18) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a Water Efficiency Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall detail how the development will ensure that the potential water consumption by occupants of each new dwelling does not exceed 110 litres per person per day. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and any measures specific to an individual dwelling shall be implemented, installed and operational prior to its occupation.
- 19) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the necessary infrastructure to facilitate connection to a high speed broadband has been installed. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, this shall include as a minimum:
 - a broadband connection accessed directly from the nearest exchange or cabinet; and
 - cabling and associated installations which enable easy access for future repair, replacement or upgrading.
- 20) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a sensitive lighting management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and carried out in accordance with the approved plan.
- 21) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no first floor windows, dormer windows or rooflights other than those expressly authorised by this permission shall be constructed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.
- 22) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no extensions or roof enlargements permitted by Classes A, B and E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of that Order shall be constructed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.