



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) MIEMA, CEnv

Decision by M Clowes BA (Hons) MCD PG CERT (Arch Con) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/25/3362264

**Vinewillow House, Old Wokingham Road, Bracknell Forest, Wokingham
RG40 3BT**

- 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 Colin Wright against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00015/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the relocation of existing vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeal property was formerly known as Haywire Cottage and this is the name given on the planning application form. However, the name has since been changed to Vinewillow House and this is how I have referred to the property in this appeal decision.
4. The planning application was made by Mr and Mrs Wright, but the appeal has been submitted by Colin Wright only.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on highway safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal property is a detached dwelling accessed from Old Wokingham Road via a vehicle crossover which leads to a large driveway and parking area to the side of the dwelling. Either side of the access is a low boundary wall and fencing.
7. I understand that the appeal site has been flooded on a number of occasions. From the evidence before me, it appears that during heavy rainfall events, drainage systems have been blocked or overwhelmed, resulting in flood water entering the property. This has resulted in costly damage to the appeal property and obvious distress for the appellant and his family.

8. The appellant has received advice that moving the access further south along Old Wokingham Road, blocking up the existing access and reinstating the kerb would prevent surface water from the road entering the appeal site. However, this has not been corroborated by detailed drainage proposals and it is unclear whether such advice considered the highway implications of the proposal to relocate the access.
9. The road was observed to be well-trafficked and subject to a 40mph speed limit near the appeal site. The proposed access would be directly opposite the access for Mileswood Farm industrial estate which has a right-turn arrangement with arrow marking for traffic. Cars entering the proposed new access from the south would contradict the right turn arrow resulting in potential conflict between vehicles. The free flow of traffic is likely to be hindered if opposing vehicles were trying to enter the accesses to either side.
10. Whilst I accept that Old Wokingham Road is unlikely to be used by pedestrians due to the lack of a dedicated footpath, there is no reason to suggest it would not be frequented by road cyclists. An increase in the likelihood of road user confusion and collisions would result in an unacceptable risk to highway safety.
11. The appellant has collected data on vehicles turning right into the industrial estate between February/March 2025. Whilst I can see that during this time period a relatively small number of vehicles made the right turn manoeuvre, it is nonetheless a snapshot in time. It is not clear whether this sample would be representative of the situation at all times of the year. Neither is it evident what size and type of vehicles enter the estate which includes a car dealership/garage. In any event, the proposed access would increase the safety risk to those vehicles choosing to turn right, as well as those using the new access.
12. It is understood that there is an opposing junction elsewhere on Old Wokingham Road. I am not aware of the frequency of traffic using this junction, whether it has a dedicated turning arrangement or whether accidents have arisen from its layout. Its historic presence does not justify permitting a new development that would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
13. I note the appellant and his relative feel unsafe using the existing access due to the conditions of the road identified above. The appeal property is positioned on a long, straight section of Old Wokingham Road and it appeared to me that visibility for drivers would be similar in both the existing and proposed access locations, a view I note is shared by the Highway Authority. The proposed access would be further away from Easthampstead Road, highlighted by the appellant as an accident blackspot, but the existing access is some distance from this junction already and there is nothing before me to suggest that it affects highway safety at the junction.
14. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed access would be inherently safer than the existing situation. To the contrary, it would introduce a greater potential for conflict between road users and the Highway Authority has expressed further concern regarding the more limited width of the proposed access which would not allow vehicles to enter and exit at the same time. I have not been supplied with a detailed traffic survey or highway assessment for the proposed access that would lead me to a different view.
15. Based on the evidence presented, the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. It would be contrary to Policy LP 25 of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan (2024), which seeks to ensure that development prevents,

minimises and mitigates negative impacts on the transport network and road safety. Conflict is also found with paragraphs 115(b) and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which seeks to prevent unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

Other Matters

16. Whilst I understand and sympathise with the appellant's reasons for seeking to prevent flooding at the appeal property, it is likely that this issue could be resolved via other solutions with the necessary cooperation of the relevant bodies. In the absence of a detailed drainage strategy, it has not been proven that the new access would satisfactorily overcome or prevent flooding occurrences, sufficient to outweigh the harm identified above. As such, I cannot attach anything other than limited weight to this matter.
17. The appellant has referred in email correspondence to planning permission being sought for an access opposite the existing drive. No specific details of this have been presented to me such that I am unable to compare the circumstances.
18. Concerns regarding the Council's approach to the planning process and the alleged lack of engagement whilst understood, are nonetheless a matter for the parties.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Clowes

INSPECTOR