
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3359760

Huckleberry, Waingels Road, Charvil, Wokingham RG10 0UA

- 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 Charlesgate Homes Limited against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 241688.
 - The proposed development is described as: 'Erection of a detached custom build house and 3 bay garage'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I note that the appellant refers to the appeal site as 'Hucklebury' in the appeal form and the appeal statement, while the site address in the application form and the Council's decision referred to 'Huckleberry'. As observed at my site visit, the property is identified as 'Huckleberry'; accordingly, I have referred to it as such throughout this decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are
 - whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for housing, with particular regard to the local and national policy; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

4. Policy CP9 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document January 2010 (Core Strategy) states that development proposals within development limits will be acceptable in Woodley, which is one of the major development locations, and Charvil, which is one of the limited development locations. Policy CC02 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan February 2014 (MDD Local Plan) defines development limits for each settlement.
5. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted, except those set out in the policy, in order to

protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment.

6. The appeal site is situated on the southern side of Waingels Road, outside the development limits of Woodley and Charvil, within the open countryside. It is currently used as a grazing field for horses. A post and rail fence marks the boundary of the site and separates it from the adjacent dwellings. It is not contended that the proposal meets any of the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy CP11 whereby a dwelling outside development limits would be acceptable. Consequently, notwithstanding that the house would be adjacent to a cluster of dwellings, it would be in conflict with this development plan policy.
7. The proposal would be served by the existing access to Huckleberry from Waingels Road. A footpath runs along the northern side of Waingels Road, and it connects to Woodley and Charvil. In the wider area, there are a college, a day nursery, and Ashenbury Park, all located adjacent to the residential area of Woodley. There are a primary school and Charvil Country Park in Charvil. The nearest bus stop to the appeal site is located on Tippings Lane in Woodley.
8. Consequently, the proposal would not be isolated. However, it would be located some distance away from many of the essential services or facilities that are required for day-to-day living. Furthermore, there is no designated footpath along the southern side of Waingels Road and no pedestrian crossing near the site. While there is a footpath on the northern side of the road, some sections are narrow due to the presence of street trees and telegraph poles. Given these constraints, occupiers of the appeal proposal would be unlikely to regularly use the footpath to access day-to-day services and facilities, particularly during the winter months when conditions are likely to be less accommodating. Consequently, the occupiers would be reliant on private vehicles rather than more sustainable modes of transport.
9. Overall, I conclude that the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the Council's spatial strategy and to local and national policies regarding sustainable transport. The proposal would, therefore, be contrary to Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6, CP9, CP11 and CP17 of the Core Strategy, and Policies CC01, CC02 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan. These policies seek, amongst other matters, to limit development in the open countryside and to direct the majority of new development to the settlements where services and facilities can be easily accessed.

Character and Appearance

10. The appeal site is one of a number of undeveloped fields in the vicinity. Its open nature and rural character offer a pleasant visual break between the surrounding countryside and areas of built form. As such, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
11. While there are some mature trees along Waingels Road and Beggars Hill Road, the appeal site is visible from Beggars Hill Road. Whilst the house would be near to existing residential properties, it would not be an infill site as suggested by the appellant, as it would lie behind the rear boundary of Malma. Given this location, and the fact that the site is partially surrounded by open fields, the proposal would result in an incongruous feature that would undermine the prevailing rural character of the area. The adverse effect would be exacerbated by the substantial

scale of the proposed buildings and the domestic paraphernalia that would be associated with the new dwelling. I acknowledge that the design and materials are similar to the adjacent dwelling, Huckleberry, but this does not overcome the harm identified.

12. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to Policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, and Policies CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan. Taken together, these seek to ensure that development is designed to the highest standard and to respect the character of the area.

Other Matter

13. My attention has been drawn to an approved scheme on land south west of Lakeside, Waingels Road. Whilst I have not been provided with full details of the approved scheme, it appears to be situated within an existing residential garden. Furthermore, it is also located closer to the existing settlement of Woodley. As a result, it is not comparable with the appeal proposal and has not altered my findings on the main issues.

Planning Balance

14. Planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I have found that the proposal would conflict with the spatial strategy of the development plan and with policies that seek to protect the distinctive rural character and appearance of the area, and I have judged the magnitude of harm to be significant. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with the development plan as a whole.
15. However, it is not disputed that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council's evidence indicates that the supply is 1.7 years, so the shortfall is substantial. In these circumstances, Paragraph 11d) of the Framework advises that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
16. The Core Strategy and the MDD Local Plan were adopted in 2010 and 2014 respectively, but the weight to be attached does not hinge on their age. Paragraph 232 of the Framework makes it clear that due weight should be given to existing policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. According to the Framework the creation of high quality and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning development process should achieve. It also seeks that developments are sympathetic to local character. Therefore, the conflict between the proposal and Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP6, CP9, CP11 and CP17 of the adopted Core Strategy, and Policies CC01, CC02, CC03 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan should be given significant weight in this appeal.
17. The appeal proposal would provide a custom-build dwelling in accordance with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (amended by the Housing and

Planning Act 2016) (the Act). Section 2A of the Act requires that enough serviced plots of land be granted planning permission to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding. Although there is no adopted development plan policy before me regarding self-build housing, Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure a mix of housing types and the Framework supports the contribution of self-build and custom-build housing in meeting housing needs and addressing housing mix.

18. Notwithstanding there is a dispute between the main parties with regard to the level of provision of self-build and custom housebuilding in the area, the appeal proposal would make a modest contribution to the custom-build supply in the area. It would also be a family dwelling, which would likely be delivered quickly, in accordance with the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. However, the modest scale of the development means that these benefits only carry limited weight.
19. There would be temporary and ongoing economic benefits due to the construction of the proposal and ongoing domestic expenditure in the area from its occupants. There would also be some environmental benefits associated with the incorporation of renewable technologies and proposed new planting. However, the combination of these benefits would be limited due to its modest scale, I therefore attach limited weight to them.
20. The appellant mentioned the emerging local plan and the Council also provided the Topic Paper: Self-build and custom housebuilding that accompanies the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan (Regulation 19) dated September 2024. However, I have not been advised whether the examining Inspectors have made any interim findings, whether main modifications have been consulted upon, whether representations have been received in response to them and whether the examining Inspectors have submitted a report. In these circumstances there is a lack of certainty about the final form of policies in the emerging plan and it attracts limited weight.
21. Consequently, the adverse effects of the proposal, taking into account, the site location and the rural character of the area, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

22. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations to indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

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INSPECTOR