



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2025 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/25/3362874

8 & 10 Trees Avenue, Hughenden Valley, Buckinghamshire HP14 4PQ

- 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 Mr & Mrs J Harvey and Mr & Mrs E & G Hayes against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref is 24/05994/FUL.
 - The development proposed is loft conversions, including side gables, rear dormers and front roof lights.
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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 application form only references Number 8 Trees Avenue; however, the further description and the other evidence confirms that the appeal is for both 8 and 10 Trees Avenue. I have therefore amended the address to reflect this and have proceeded with the appeal on this basis. Main parties would not be prejudiced by this change.
4. Prior to this decision, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Having reviewed the changes, I am satisfied that they do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal and proceeding without further consultation with the main parties would not be prejudicial to their respective cases.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the area; and b) protected species.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

6. In regard to this main issue, the Council have raised no objections to the hip to gable roof extension or the rooflights and I have no reason to disagree. My findings here therefore focus on the dormer windows. The appeal buildings are a pair of semi-detached dwellings fronting an unmaintained private road. Whilst differing in

their type and configuration, local buildings display a largely unaltered roofscape atop a reducing hierarchy to window sizes from the ground floors upwards. Both of which lend a pleasant originality and consistency to built form that resultantly contributes positively to the visual qualities of the area.

7. Whilst the proposed dormers would retain a level of symmetry between the adjoined properties, they would be large and obvious, spanning a significant amount of the roof space. They would therefore appear more as one single and subsequently bulky entity which would interrupt the original shape of the roof. Not only would they erode the unaltered qualities of the area in their respect, they would also unacceptably buck the established trend of opening hierarchy, creating a top heavy impression to the rear. This may limit their presence in the street to glimpses but they would be highly visible from neighbouring gardens.
8. The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (DG) focusses on quality in the design of new buildings and alterations thereto explaining, amongst other things, that dormers should be kept low on the roof, small and designed to let in light rather than create additional space in attic rooms. For the above reasons, the appeal scheme would not sit squarely with the DG.
9. The street scene is punctuated by greenery to front gardens and some lawned areas. Some have been given over to parking. There are some trees to rear gardens which, to some degree, reflect the wooded and rural properties of the surrounding open areas. These, as well as the settlement itself, are within the Chilterns National Landscape (CNL) which contains large areas of dense woodland with wide open uninterrupted naturally formed spaces and contained small settlements arranged around roads often the valleys of picturesque rolling hills.
10. Paragraph 189 of the Framework sets out that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in these areas. I remain to be convinced that the harms I have found would extend to the special qualities of the CNL as I have referred to them above. The proposed development would be contained within the confines of the plot which itself is part of an established built-up area. The landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape would therefore be conserved as a result of the proposals.
11. The proposals would nonetheless cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, there would be conflict with Policies DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019), the Householder Planning and Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2020) and the Framework. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

Protected Species

12. Given the semi-rural and verdant nature of the village's surroundings, there is a greater likelihood of the presence of protected species. Bats in this case. Whilst the scale of the proposed works would be modest in the grand scheme, they would involve significant invasive alterations to the roof. Which is where roosting habitat is more likely.
13. The Preliminary Roost Assessment found no evidence of bats, but it recommends additional survey work to solidify that beyond doubt. This has not been undertaken. With this in mind, and adopting the precautionary principle, it would not be

appropriate to grant a planning permission since it might be affected by unknown variables. The presence of bats in this case. The mitigation for which then has the potential to affect development for which a planning permission would then exist should it be granted.

14. I cannot therefore be satisfied that the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of Policy DM34 of the LP, Policies DM13 and DM14 of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (2013), the Framework, ODPM Circular 06/2005 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which together seek to ensure that development proposals do not result in harm to the biodiversity of the area.

Other Matters

15. The appeal proposals would differ from both 11 Trees Avenue and 25 Friars Garden in both their siting and scale. Whilst the neighbouring properties may have some similarities in their flat roof nature, their overall design and context are materially different to this. Additionally, I am unaware of the prevailing matters which were taken into consideration for 25 Friars Garden. Resultantly, their presence wouldn't lead me to a different conclusion on the main issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan, and I have been given no other compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate therefrom. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR