



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 April 2025 by S Indermaur BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by A Walker MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/25/3360555

Crevan (formerly Meadowsweet), Beals Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, West Berkshire RG31 5UD

- 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 and Mrs P Fox against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01672/HOUSE.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear and two storey side and first floor extensions and new garage to the front garden
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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.

Main Issue

3. Planning permission was granted in 2024¹ for extensions to the appeal property similar to those that form part of the appeal proposal before me. These were being constructed at the time of my visit. The Council raise no objection to the extensions that form part of the proposal before me, with the only element in dispute being the garage.
4. In light of the above, the main issue is the effect of the proposed garage on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The detached appeal property is located on a residential street where dwellings are varied in appearance. Properties on this street share a similar building line that is mostly uninterrupted by detached development to the front, establishing a pleasant quality and consistency. These properties sit within spacious plots set back from the road by some distance with parking areas and gardens to the front. There are mature trees, hedges and shrubs that are situated around the site boundaries of the dwellings. The houses within the lane are positioned on one side of the road, surrounded on three sides by unbroken fields and trees. As such the street has a mostly open, verdant and spacious frontage which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

¹ Council reference 24/00251/HOUSE

6. The detached garage would be situated forward of the appeal property. This positioning of the garage would detract from and dominate the pleasant front elevation of the host dwelling. Whilst there would be space to physically accommodate the garage, it would sit beyond the established building line of properties on the lane and erode the established openness and spaciousness to the front. As such the proposal would be unsympathetic in form, pattern and character to the lane, appearing as an incongruous addition. Even if there is vegetation at the entrance of Beals Lane that may obscure visibility from Little Heath Road, it would nevertheless be visible and have a visual impact when passing down Beals Lane and from neighbouring properties.
7. The appellant has stated that they intend to carry out mature landscaping around the site boundary which they suggest being conditioned. However, there is no mechanism suggested which would secure the planting in the long term (for the entire lifetime of the development). Landscaping of this nature will have a natural end to its lifetime and is therefore not likely to remain in situ indefinitely. Whilst conditions can secure the retention of the landscaping element, typically, it would be for a time limited period, as it would not be reasonable to secure landscaping in perpetuity. In the event that the landscaping was not present, which could be the position in the longer term, the garage would be very visible, unduly harming the spacious character of the street scene. Moreover, such landscaping would take a long time to establish and there is no evidence that it would screen the development to such an extent that it would adequately mitigate its harm.
8. Barley Mow is located on a corner plot next to the junction onto Beals Lane. Whilst the dwelling has a forward projection that extends out beyond the main elevation, it is attached to the property and does not project out as much as the proposed garage. As such the projection does not dominate and detract from the architectural integrity of the dwelling, allowing the property to be read as a whole. In addition, the property is located at the start of the lane and the garage corners off the property/ street – as such this property has a different context and is not read in the same way. The appeal property is situated in the middle of the row of properties and as a result the garage would be read as an incongruous punctuation of the building line, rather than a bookend to it like the property on the corner. Furthermore, this dwelling replaces a building that was set further forward towards the site boundary. Consequently, the setting back of this property has integrated well into the spacious and open street frontage.
9. I am aware that the appeal site is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (NL). The evidence does not set out what the special qualities of the NL are and moreover how they might be affected by the appeal scheme. The Council do not allege any harm to the NL. The proposed development would be a detached and subservient outbuilding to the main dwelling and contained entirely within its curtilage which has other 'built up' elements. The plot is within a cluster of built form, making up an enclave of development of other dwellings, outbuildings and residential activity. The appeal scheme would not extend beyond this into the more unspoilt landscape. The harm I have found above would not therefore extend to the special qualities of the NL. They would therefore be preserved.
10. I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with Policy CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012). Together these Policies state that new development should be appropriate in terms of location in the

context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character and appearance of the area.

11. There would also be conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure development is sympathetic to local character.
12. The proposal would conflict with the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004) (SPG) which outlines that garages should normally be located to the side or rear of dwellings. Whilst the SPG has been in effect for over 20 years, it nevertheless remains as a material consideration.

Other Matters

13. The appeal property benefits from a rear access to the dwelling that leads up to an existing double garage. Whilst the start of the lane before the appeal property's rear access is shared with an entrance to a field, it noted the lane is still likely usable for domestic cars. Furthermore, I have no evidence that a car could not turn around within the site or at the end of the lane before entering the main road.
14. Although the entrances into the dwelling are at the front of the property and a garage at the front would therefore be more convenient, this is a private benefit of very limited weight. Moreover, even if the existing garage is in a poor state of repair and there have been recent thefts on site, there is no evidence that the proposal is the most appropriate way to deal with this. Collectively these factors are given limited weight and do not outweigh the harm identified.
15. The appellant also refers to a recent planning permission for a detached garage elsewhere². Notwithstanding the very limited details of the permission, the drawing submitted for it shows properties without the same building line as Beals Lane. Accordingly, I draw no direct comparison with the proposal before me that weighs in its favour.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. The proposal would conflict with the development plan read as a whole and there are no material considerations that justify granting permission. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Indermaur

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.

A Walker

INSPECTOR

² Council reference 24/01617/HOUSE