



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by R J Jackson BA MPhil DMS MRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 October 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3359455

North Lodge, Church Road, Aldermaston, Reading RG7 4LT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a grant of planning permission subject to conditions.
 - The appeal is made by Dove Crag Ltd against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00388/FUL was approved on 26 July 2024 and planning permission was granted subject to conditions.
 - The development permitted is proposed demolition of existing extension and replacement with new single storey extension and associated amendments to the landscape to create a new residential curtilage and provision of parking spaces.
 - The condition in dispute is No 20 which states that: The extension shall not be brought into use until the brickwork repairs to the Grade II listed bridge, as identified in the Alan Baxter Report entitled 'Aldermaston Park Structural Engineering Notes on the form and condition of selected outbuildings/structures of Aldermaston Park' dated February 2016, submitted in connection with application 16/02286/FULEXT have been carried out using traditional materials and techniques, and shall match the existing brickwork in terms of bricks (size, colour and texture); mortar (mix, colour and texture); joint profile; and bond.
 - The reason given for the condition is: The proposal will result in an increase of vehicular movements over the bridge, which lies within the application site area. The Alan Baxter report identified the need for a number of brickwork repairs to the bridge. To [sic] condition is therefore necessary to protect the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).
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Appeal B Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3359457

North West Lodge, Church Road, Aldermaston, Reading RG7 4LT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a grant of planning permission subject to conditions.
 - The appeal is made by Dove Crag Ltd against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00394/FUL was approved on 26 July 2024 and planning permission was granted subject to conditions.
 - The development permitted is proposed demolition of existing extension and replacement with new single storey extension and associated amendments to the landscape to create a new residential curtilage and provision of parking spaces.
 - The condition in dispute is No 22 which states that: The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the brickwork repairs to the Grade II listed bridge, as identified in the Alan Baxter Report entitled 'Aldermaston Park Structural Engineering Notes on the form and condition of selected outbuildings/structures of Aldermaston Park' dated February 2016, submitted in connection with application 16/02286/FULEXT have been carried out using traditional materials and techniques, and shall match the existing brickwork in terms of bricks (size, colour and texture); mortar (mix, colour and texture); joint profile; and bond.
 - The reason given for the condition is: The proposal will result in an increase of vehicular movements over the bridge, which lies within the application site area. The Alan Baxter report identified the need for a number of brickwork repairs to the bridge. To [sic] condition is therefore necessary to protect the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).
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Decisions

Appeal A Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3359455

1. The appeal is allowed and the planning permission Ref 23/00388/FUL for proposed demolition of existing extension and replacement with new single storey extension and associated amendments to the landscape to create a new residential curtilage and provision of parking spaces at North Lodge, Church Road, Aldermaston, Reading RG7 4LT granted on 26 July 2024 by West Berkshire District Council, is varied by deleting condition 20.

Appeal B Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3359457

2. The appeal is allowed and the planning permission Ref 23/00394/FUL for Proposed demolition of existing extension and replacement with new single storey extension and associated amendments to the landscape to create a new residential curtilage and provision of parking spaces at North West Lodge, Church Road, Aldermaston, Reading RG7 4LT granted on 26 July 2024 by West Berkshire District Council, is varied by deleting condition 22.

Preliminary Matters

3. West Berkshire Council adopted a new local plan, the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023 to 2041 (the WBLPR) on 10 June 2025. This superseded the West Berkshire Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (Saved Policies 2007). The Council provided a revised commentary based on these new policies and the appellant was given the opportunity to comment upon this.
4. While the two conditions are worded slightly differently, they are of the same effect, and the merits can be considered together. No party has suggested that the condition could or should apply to one proposal but not the other.
5. Separate listed building consents have been granted by the Council for the works to the buildings. These do not include the disputed conditions on the basis that they do not relate to those proposed works to the listed building.

Main Issue

6. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. The Planning Practice Guidance also provides guidance on the use of conditions.
7. While this type of appeal allows the decision maker to revisit the overall merits of the appeal, I have no reason to disagree with the overall decision. There is also no dispute that the disputed conditions relate to planning and the development being permitted, and they are enforceable and precise. Consequently, the only issue being whether the conditions are necessary and reasonable in all other respects.

Reasons

8. The two lodges the subject of the two appeals lie on the north side of the Aldermaston Court estate. Originally dating from around 1636 they were built in a Tudor style of red brick and stone dressing with Dutch gables. The two buildings

were originally one, a Dower House, but were separated in the early 19th century when the ornate wrought iron, eagle, gates now between them were installed. The two lodges are listed at Grade II*, with the gates forming part of the listing. Both have been compromised by small extensions of varying quality. For the purposes of this appeal their significance relates to their inherent historical and architectural quality, and their relationship with the overall Aldermaston Court estate.

9. The lodges also fall within the Aldermaston Conservation Area, marking the southern, top, end of the main street through the village and provide a focal point in the vista along The Street. For the purposes of this appeal the significance of the Conservation Area relates to its form of frontage development along the main streets of the village with the lodges making an important contribution to this significance.
10. Furthermore, the lodges are within the Aldermaston Court Registered Park and Garden (RPG), designated at Grade II. Aldermaston Park was first mentioned in 1299 as a deer park. In 1636 the main manor house was rebuilt and with it the Dower House constructed. A large lake was created during the 18th century. The main house was largely burnt out in 1843 with a new house built on a different site within the estate. At this time formal gardens were created around that new house. This main house, Aldermaston Court, which is listed Grade II*, lies within the centre of the site. For the purposes of this appeal the significance of Aldermaston Court relates to it being the principal building of the estate.
11. It is these formal gardens that now form the extent of the RPG. The former park to the south, outside the RPG, now forms the main Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston site.
12. The RPG extends for some 70 hectares, with the main, historic, entrance from between the two lodges. The drive curves south-east through the pleasure grounds, carried on a bridge across a small pond, continuing south-east on rising land towards the former stable block and beyond to the main house. A short spur provides a link through to Church Road.
13. For the purposes of this appeal the significance of the RPG relates to its overall layout and history, mainly of the mid and late 19th century gardens surrounding the mid 19th century house, with the remains of the 17th and 18th century pleasure gardens relating to the former manor house.
14. The planning permissions the subject of these appeals permit the demolition of earlier small extensions and additions to both properties. The easterly of the two (North Lodge) would have extensions to the east, together with the creation of an area of private garden from the parkland on that side. For the westerly of the two (North West Lodge) the extension would be to the south, with a private garden beyond that. Car parking for both dwellings would be provided to the south of North Lodge with access from the driveway.
15. The conditions in dispute relate to a bridge across the upper of two smaller ponds (to distinguish them from the main lake). This bridge is a Grade II listed building in its own right dating from around 1894. Constructed of red brick with grey bands, it has a shallow arch, and arched balustrade with coping curving out at either end. For the purposes of this appeal, the significance relates to its architectural form within the overall RPG and marking part of the main entrance drive to the estate from the village.

16. The application sites for the two applications, while different around the two lodges themselves, both follow the main drive as described above up to and including the short spur to Church Road. The application forms for the two proposals indicate that the access arrangements would not change. However, it is not clear what they currently are. There is a parking area beyond the gates to the north of the lodges, and the main drive had, at the time of my site visit, been subsumed with vegetation for the majority of the distance between the lodges and the bridge making it impassable by vehicle and awkward by foot.
17. In the grounds of appeal, it is stated that the route across the bridge *"is only to be used as a secondary means of access to these properties"*. However, this leaves open the question as to why the whole of the route as described falls within the application sites if this is not to be used for vehicular traffic servicing the lodges, particularly as the route from Church Road is the main operational access to the overall Aldermaston Court site at present.
18. Both conditions refer to 'The Alan Baxter report'. I have been provided with a copy. This report was prepared in 2016 and is entitled 'Aldermaston Park Structural Engineering notes on the form and condition of Selected outbuildings structure of Aldermaston Park'. At this time, it was noted that *"the arch profile does not look as though it has deformed and there are no obvious signs of significant movement"*, although there was a lot of vegetation. There were various defects noted, generally to brickwork and open joints. The repairs recommended were that vegetation should be removed and the brickwork and mortar issues resolved. This report is now nearly 10 years old. The condition of the bridge I saw at the site visit was similar to those in the photographs in the report, although vegetation had further grown in the intervening period.
19. The appellant explains that the report was prepared as part of comprehensive proposals for the significant development of the site as part of an enabling development case to ensure the long-term retention of various heritage assets. I note that the application for these proposals was refused in 2018.
20. Whether the route across the bridge is to be used as the main or secondary access to the lodges the amount of traffic which would use the bridge for these purposes is likely to only be limited. There is no evidence to show that the bridge is not structurally sound and therefore would not be a safe route, nor evidence to show that traffic using the bridge would be likely to result in damage or harm to it. The use of the bridge for these purposes would therefore preserve it as a designated heritage asset, using it for the purpose for which it was designed.
21. I am also satisfied that the removal of the conditions would preserve the RPG as a designated heritage asset, would preserve the settings of the other identified listed buildings, and the setting of the Conservation Area.
22. I therefore conclude that the conditions are not necessary, and therefore the developments can proceed without them.
23. The other proposed works to the lodges would enhance their significances as heritage assets, and this would also enhance the settings of the other listed buildings in the vicinity, the RPG as a whole and the Conservation Area. It would therefore comply with Policies SP7, SP9, DM10 and DM12 of the WBLPR. These require high quality design, the conservation, and where appropriate, enhancement of, among other matters, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and

conservation areas, giving detailed criteria for consideration. There would also be compliance with sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant policies of the Framework relating to the protection of heritage assets.

Other Matters

24. The Council and Parish Council are concerned that without opportunities, such as the current case, for enhancement there is a risk of the various heritage assets on the overall estate falling into disrepair. In my view, except as a case of enabling development, which is not asserted here, this does not provide a reason for requiring the works subject to the conditions. Furthermore, there are powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which can be used where reasonable steps are not being taken for properly preserving a listed building. There are also policy presumptions that apply in cases where there is deliberate neglect of, or damage to, heritage assets; this has not been asserted to apply in the current cases.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeals should succeed. I will vary the planning permissions by deleting the disputed conditions.

RJ Jackson

INSPECTOR