



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by **Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/W/25/3372232

Crann Mor Nursing Home, 151 Old Woking Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 8PD

- 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 Crann Mor Nursing Home against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application ref. is PLAN/2024/0904.
 - The development proposed is: *Proposed single storey rear extension to provide additional 6 x 1 person bedroom accommodation and 1 assisted bathroom.*
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. Flowing from the Council's single reason for refusal on the decision notice, the main issue is whether the proposal would amount to overdevelopment of the site when judged against the character of the area and the standard of the residential accommodation for existing and future occupants of the nursing home.

Reasons

3. This part of Old Woking Road is within a built-up area that has been developed at a very low density. Large detached properties stand on sizeable plots, often set back well into their respective plots with generous front and rear amenity spaces. There is a strong green character with most properties being set in their own landscape. The canopies of mature trees typically limit the views of the buildings from the road.
4. All these characteristics are present at Crann Mor, a 2-storey building with rooms in the roof space and later single-storey additions which have created an L-shaped ground floor plan. The building and the rear private garden occupy the rear half of the plot. The site is affected by a Tree Preservation Order. There are many individual trees or groups of trees, particularly close to all the boundaries of the site.
5. The single-storey rear extension proposed would in turn be L-shaped, resulting in an overall rectangular ground floor plan for the nursing home with an internal open courtyard. I am concerned that there would be insufficient land available within the rear garden for such an extension without leading to adverse consequences.
6. The site coverage and scale of the proposed structure would lead to a dramatic reduction in open amenity space across the private rear garden. Such a density of built form would be out of keeping with the typical characteristics of adjacent

buildings and land, eroding the local townscape's spacious character.

7. The extension would be extremely close to the rear boundary (a common boundary with 1 Lincoln Drive) reaching along most of its length, such that the development would appear cramped within and contrived to fill the site. The lack of space around it and the resulting hard built-up edge to the rear boundary, compared to the current more natural edge, would not be visually attractive especially as viewed from 1 Lincoln Drive or sympathetic to local character.
8. A linear row of Lawson cypress trees along that rear boundary and 6 other trees are scheduled for removal. These trees are not of any notable merit in themselves in purely arboricultural terms as set out in the assessment by Origin Environmental and as confirmed by the Council's Arboricultural Officer. However, the lack of space to incorporate replacement landscaping to enhance the setting of the development would not be reflective of the local picturesque approach to landscape with a strong green character and would further point to overdevelopment in the design.
9. The rear courtyard garden area would be very modest in size, offer very limited opportunities for significant replacement planting and lack the visual delight and attractiveness of the existing rear garden which is likely to be enjoyed by some residents of the nursing home from time to time.
10. The scheme would not affect any heritage assets or any public street scene and may not set a precedent for similar proposals in the nearby rear gardens of C3 dwelling houses. However, in this instance, the scale and layout of the development in relation to the area of the site and the rear garden in particular would amount to overdevelopment to the detriment of the character of the area.
11. The Council's criticisms about the standard of the residential accommodation for residents of both the proposed and existing bedrooms are well founded. Proposed bedrooms 1 and 5 would suffer from unduly restricted outlooks, especially in comparison to the more centrally located proposed bedrooms, as projecting elements of the existing building would be uncomfortably close.
12. Given the small size of the courtyard and its proximity to and the lack of proper separation from various existing and proposed ground floor bedrooms, residents of many of these bedrooms would suffer from a lack of privacy or alternatively may face lengthy daytime periods inside them with their curtains drawn. The use of the courtyard for outdoor recreation would change from time to time depending on the mobility of the residents. Residents in their bedrooms may well benefit from seeing other residents outside but they should be able to do so without being confronted with a wholesale lack of privacy.
13. The general lighting levels in the proposed bedrooms are unlikely to reach satisfactory levels given the cramped layout, the proximity of the 2-storey core of the existing nursing home and the north-western aspect of those bedrooms.
14. Drawing the above threads together, I consider that the single storey rear extension would harm the character of the area and introduce a poor standard of residential accommodation for existing and future occupants of the nursing home. This indicates to me that the appeal site would be developed to excess. I therefore find on the main issue that the proposal would amount to overdevelopment of the site.
15. Policy CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy October 2012 (WCS) requires all

proposals to provide a positive benefit in terms of Woking's landscape and townscape character, and local distinctiveness. Policy CS21 of the WCS expects development to: respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land; incorporate landscaping to enhance the setting of the development and provide for suitable boundary treatments; and provide appropriate levels of private amenity space. The appeal scheme would fail to accord with the objectives of these development plan policies which are consistent with a key aim of the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve well-designed places. It would also be out of step with the Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2022 and the Woking Design SPD 2015.

Other material considerations

16. The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2015 identifies parts of the site to be at a medium, high and very high risk of surface water flooding. The Council's delegation report has a second reason for refusal on the grounds that the proposal fails to demonstrate it accords with the sequential approach to the location of development so as to avoid development within areas at risk of flooding and to prioritise development in areas with the lowest flood risk. This reason did not feature in the decision notice which I have to treat as representing the settled view of the Council, in the absence of any further relevant clarification from the Council. Given my finding on the main issue, I do not assess this matter any further.
17. The site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), a European site afforded protection by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Ordinarily, residential development in this area is likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of the SPA through increased urbanisation and recreational pressure. I am dismissing the appeal on the basis of other identified harms, so an appropriate assessment is not strictly required. That said, I would see no basis to depart from the view of the Council and the appellant that the additional accommodation proposed is not of the type that would be likely to see occupiers creating demands for recreation in the SPA.
18. Given its limited height and inward-looking main windows, I judge that the scheme would not have harmful enclosing or overlooking effects on the rear-facing rooms and back garden of 1 Lincoln Drive. Noise levels are unlikely to materially increase given the screening effect of the new extension and the smaller remaining garden.
19. The proposed net increase in 5 ground floor bedrooms at Crann Mor would go some way towards meeting the ever-increasing demand for care home accommodation in Woking. However, this does not outweigh the harm I have found on the main issue.

Conclusion

20. The proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole and there are no other material considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR