



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2025 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/25/3370983

The Chalet, 5 Ethorpe Close, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 8PL

- 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 Berat Ismajli against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/24/0973/FA.
 - The development proposed is additional storey to existing dwelling.
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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 Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on 1) the character and appearance of the area, and 2) protected species.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow with dormer windows to its front and rear roof slopes. It is located on Ethorpe Close which is a residential street consisting of a variety of mainly two storey detached dwellings of a variety of different architectural styles in deep plots. This results in a variation between plot sizes, layout, and differences in the gaps between properties which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The Council's concern relates to the proximity of built form to the boundary with No.6 Ethorpe Close and how they consider this conflicts with Policy H11 (d) of the Local Plan (2011) which advises that where a proposal is for an extension of more than one storey or for an extension at or above first floor level, the extension would be at least one metre from either flank boundary of the site.
6. The appeal dwelling is less than one metre from the boundary with No.6 and therefore the proposed introduction of an additional storey would conflict with this policy. However, from my site visit I observed that the properties on Ethorpe Close have varying relationships with each other due to their design, scale, massing and siting which is reflected in the appeal dwellings existing relationship with No.6. As

the proposed development would not result in an increase in the footprint of the property, a gap between these properties would be maintained and unaltered.

7. Moreover, given the setback position of the appeal dwelling in contrast with No.6, the potential for the proposal to create a terracing effect with this neighbouring property is unlikely. Particularly when considering the very different architectural form of the properties and boundary treatment separation.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed development therefore complies with the aims of Policies EP3, H11 and Appendix 8 of the South Bucks District Plan (2011), The Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework and the guidance set out in the South Bucks District Residential Design Guide (2008) which all seek, amongst other things, for development to be compatible with the character and amenities of the site itself, adjoining development and the locality in general.

Protected Species

9. No ecological information has been submitted. I have noted that in the appellant's grounds of appeal that neither themselves nor their agent have seen any bats upon visual inspection.
10. Guidance at paragraphs 98 and 99 of Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System makes it clear that the presence of a protected species and the effect of the proposed development on such species is a material consideration in the assessment of a development proposal, and that the presence or otherwise of such species needs to be addressed prior to the grant of planning permission. The guidance is clear that the imposition of a condition on a planning permission to investigate the impact of the proposal on protected species is not an appropriate way forward and that the position needs to be addressed prior to the grant of planning permission.
11. Given the extent of works proposed to the roof of the existing house, the age of the property and the verdant surroundings, and taking the precautionary view, I consider that further information would be required to determine the potential presence or otherwise of protected species, and with particular regard to bat species, prior to the grant of any planning permission for the proposed works.
12. I am therefore unable to conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful impact on protected species within or near the site. There is clear conflict with Circular 06/2005 to conserve and enhance biological diversity. It would also conflict with Policy CP9 of the South Bucks Core Strategy (2011) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework which set out similar objectives in this regard.

Other Matters

13. The appeal property is within the Gerrards Cross Centenary Conservation Area ('the CA') The appeal property therefore benefits from statutory protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
14. As required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

15. The CA is characterised as being in the garden village layout and was influenced by the garden city and garden suburb movements of the early 20th century. It contains a variety of mainly detached houses in a selection of differing architectural styles which provides a high aesthetic value.
16. The proposal would extend the appeal dwelling into a two-storey property which would match the surrounding properties in this part of the CA. Buckinghamshire Council's heritage officer stated that, given the simple form and design of the proposal and the fact that the dwelling retained its permitted development rights. The resulting extended dwelling would not be considered to result in a detrimental harm to the surrounding CA and I see no reason to disagree with this conclusion from the information before me and my observations on my site visit.
17. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would result in a neutral impact, and thereby preserve the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. Whilst I have found in favour of the appellant on the first main issue, I cannot be certain that protected species are sufficiently safeguarded in regard to the second main issue. As a result, I therefore recommend the appeal be dismissed.

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR