
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2025

by **O Tresise MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3366165

9 Clay Close, Tilehurst, Reading, West Berkshire RG31 5QB

- 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 Ms A Manassaki against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02231/FUL.
 - The proposed development is described as 'Existing double garage approved under planning application number 21/02703/HOUSE on the 29th December 2021 to convert into a granny annex with a single storey pitched roof front extension. New proposal to convert into a new detached bungalow with flat roof rear extension'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted amended plans with the appeal in an attempt to overcome the Council's concerns. These have not been commented on by the Council or interested parties, and present material changes to the application scheme. In line with the Wheatcroft principles, the appeal must be determined on the basis of the plans as originally submitted.
3. The Council's Decision Notice and Officer Report quote the policies of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), which was adopted in July 2012. However, these policies have been superseded by the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023 to 2041 (LPR), which was adopted after the Council determined the planning application, and now forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. The main parties were able to comment on policies of the LPR that would be relevant, and I have based my decision on these policies rather than those which were originally quoted in the Decision Notice.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - character and appearance of the area;
 - the living conditions of occupiers of 9 Clay Close and the proposed dwelling with particular reference to privacy, noise and disturbance;
 - the living conditions of occupiers of the proposed dwelling, with particular regard to outlook; and
 - highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling and a detached double garage, located at the end of a residential cul-de-sac. Whilst some properties within this cul-de-sac vary in design and form, the dwellings are two-storey in height. The adjacent dwellings also benefit from proportionately sized private rear gardens, which contribute to a spacious and coherent pattern of development. These elements collectively make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
6. The proposed single storey rear extension would be modest in scale and largely obscured by existing buildings. However, it would extend to a point where it would almost reach the rear railing. Unlike existing dwellings in the area, the proposed bungalow would not benefit from a clearly defined private outdoor amenity space. Consequently, the proposal would leave the new dwelling with a significantly constrained outdoor space, further reinforcing the perception of overdevelopment.
7. In addition, the appeal proposal would introduce a single storey dwelling, which would detract from the prevailing two-storey character of the area. Consequently, it would appear as an incongruous feature within the street scene and would fail to respect or enhance the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
8. The appellant indicates that the existing trees at the front of the property and the landscaping along the boundary would be retained. However, I am not convinced that this would fully address my concerns, which are of a more fundamental nature.
9. I conclude that the appeal proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the development would be contrary to Policies SP7 and SP8 of the LPR, amongst other things, seek to achieve high quality design and that new development should respect the scale and character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions – privacy, noise and disturbance

10. The submitted plans provide limited information on how the existing garden and patio would be subdivided, and there are little details regarding boundary treatment. As such, the main garden would likely to be shared. Occupiers of the proposed bungalow would be required to pass along the rear of the main dwelling to access this garden, and any use of the shared outdoor space, such as socialising or domestic activities would take place in close proximity to the rear-facing windows and the conservatory of the host dwelling. Consequently, occupiers of both properties would be exposed to noise and disturbance. It would also lead to a significant degree of overlooking, thereby undermining the enjoyment of both the existing dwelling and the proposed bungalow.
11. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of the existing property, 9 Clay Close, and the proposed bungalow. Therefore, it would conflict with Policy DM30 of the LPR, which requires new development to be designed to protect the amenity of the occupiers of the adjoining development.

Living conditions – outlook

12. The submitted drawings indicate that the proposed extension would include a patio door at the rear elevation and a roof lantern, which would allow some natural light into the kitchen area. However, there would be no windows serving the living area, aside from the entrance door. As a result, the living room would receive limited natural light, giving rise to an unsatisfactory standard of living environment. The limited daylight would adversely affect the comfort and overall standard of living of the occupiers, thereby resulting in harm to their living conditions.
13. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of the proposed bungalow. Therefore, it would conflict with Policy DM30 of the LPR, which requires new development to be designed to protect the amenity of the occupiers of the proposal.

Highway Safety

14. The drawings provided indicate that four parking spaces would be provided, with two spaces serving the existing dwelling and two spaces serving the proposed bungalow. The appellant contends that the proposed parking spaces would meet the dimensions and spacing requirements set by the Council, and the turning area would provide safe ingress and egress. Whilst the proposed parking spaces may meet the requirements, the appeal proposal would rely on the existing access, which would be shared between two properties. The entrance section of this access is narrower than the proposed parking area, and limited information has been provided to demonstrate that the parking spaces for each dwelling could be used independently without vehicles blocking or obscuring one another. As a consequence, the proposed arrangement would result in vehicles parking on the street or waiting at the cul-de-sac to access their properties. This would increase pressure on the use of the cul-de-sac and would be detrimental to highway safety of other road users.
15. The appellant states that surface materials would match the existing finishes and electric car charging points would be incorporated. However, these elements do not outweigh the harm identified above.
16. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would be contrary to Policies SP19 and DM44 of the LPR, taken together, which ensure that new development does not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and that it is not compromised by the provision of off-street parking.

Other Matters

17. The appeal proposal would introduce an additional small dwelling, which could be used as a retirement home by the appellant or by others seeking smaller accommodation. This would make a modest contribution to housing diversity in the area. The proposal would also incorporate a number of features aimed at responding positively to climate change. However, these benefits would be modest in scale and therefore attract only limited weight.
18. The Council do not raise objections to the proposal in terms of protected tree area and drainage. However, the compliance with the development plan in these respects is a neutral factor.

Conclusion

19. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

O Tresa

INSPECTOR