



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2025

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/W/25/3371866

Meadowbrook Montessori Pre-School, Bracknell Road, Warfield RG42 6BP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant approval required under Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Quentin Trivor Ltd against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00100/PAE.
 - The development proposed is 6 no. self-contained residential units.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is deemed to be granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for 6 no. self contained residential units at Meadowbrook Montessori Pre-School, Bracknell Road, Warfield RG42 6BP in accordance with the application Ref 25/00100/PAE and the details submitted with it including plan numbers 001; 011, 105 Rev B; 110; 111; 120; 121 and 122 pursuant to Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA and subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have been made aware of the grant of prior approval for residential development at the appeal site. Whilst I have had regard to this application my determination is focused upon the development proposals before me.
3. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the GPDO) permits the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E of the Use Classes Order to a use falling within Class C3. As set out in the GPDO, the developer must, before beginning the development, apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access, amongst other things.
4. Following determination of the application the appellant has produced additional information in the form of a revised site layout plan, showing the access arrangements as they are currently and associated vehicle swept path diagrams. In my judgement this information does not represent a substantial difference or a fundamental change to the scheme, nor does it evolve it. I have, therefore, paid regard to these documents in consideration of the appeal.

5. Having regard to the Holborn Studios judgement¹ which follows on from Wheatcroft² I am satisfied that no interested parties have been prejudiced by my approach.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the proposed development would be granted planning permission by Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 3, Class MA with regard to the transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access.

Reasons

7. The appeal site comprises a red brick Victorian former school house and more recent additions and buildings. Positioned to the east of the buildings is a car park served by a one way in/out drive benefiting from directional signage and markings on the ground. The site was previously occupied as a pre-school but based on the condition of the buildings this use ceased some time ago. The wider site includes a playing field formerly associated with the school but does not form part of the site or the proposal.
8. In terms of the transport impacts, two areas of concern are raised by the Council. Firstly, the site access and secondly the separation of the site from the neighbouring playing fields.
9. The access and egress arrangements for the site would essentially replicate the arrangements that served the site when it operated as a pre-school. Based on the swept-path diagrams a vehicle turning left out of the site would swing onto the opposite side of the road, but this would only be during turning and for a very short distance and unlikely to conflict with oncoming traffic.
10. I am also mindful that the previous use of the site would have likely attracted a greater number of and more frequent vehicular trips compared to the scheme before me. The modest size and nature of the residential development proposed is likely to lead to less intensive traffic movements along the road.
11. Turning now to the second area of concern – I note that the school buildings were associated with the field to the west. However, this relationship now appears to have been severed and the fields whilst in the appellant's ownership do not form part of the redline plan submitted with the application.
12. The appellant advises that maintenance of the field would occur around four times a year. In my view such activity would be for a short period of time and unlikely to generate significant levels of traffic or vehicle movements leading to a detriment to highway safety.
13. There is no dispute between the main parties that the school buildings and playing fields fall within Use Class E and which does not include outdoor sport or recreation. Therefore, the use of the playing field for a recreation use would require planning permission. It is not for me to speculate on any future development of the field and this matter is beyond the scope of this prior approval. On this basis and as the field does not form part of the appeal site, this matter is not determinative in assessment of this appeal.

¹ Holborn Studios Ltd v The Council of the London Borough of Hackney [2017] EWHC 2823 (Admin)

² Bernard Wheatcroft Ltd v Secretary of State for the Environment [JPL, 1982, P37]

14. As such, I am satisfied that the transport impacts of the development including with regard to safe access would be acceptable in accordance with the provisions of paragraph MA.2(2)(a).

Other Matters

15. Representations have been received that the scheme would not be in keeping with the rural character of the area. However, dwellings form part of the rural landscape and given the modest scale of the development it is unlikely to lead to a notable change in the character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, this is a matter that falls beyond what I can consider under prior approval.

Conditions

16. Standard conditions are set out in paragraph MA.2 of the GPDO, whilst paragraph W allows further conditions to be imposed that are reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval.
17. As paragraph MA.2.(5) states that the development must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the prior approval date I have not imposed a time-limit condition. As the GPDO provides that development must be carried out in accordance with the details approved it is not necessary for a condition specifying the approved plans.
18. As the playing field is not a relevant factor in assessment of the proposal a condition for details of its maintenance is not reasonable. The Council has suggested a condition for a Construction (and Demolition) Environmental Management Plan. However, this matter does not relate to the subject matter of the prior approval nor is the conversion of the property into 6 apartments likely to result in a significant highway impact and in any event the conversion works would be short term.
19. Conditions for the disposal of surface water drainage, flood resilience measures and land contamination have been suggested by the Council, however, no justification has been provided for their imposition. Despite the Council suggesting a condition sufficient detail on the plans in respect of refuse storage and collection has been provided. As such, I find that these suggested conditions are not reasonable or necessary.
20. That said, it is necessary and reasonable to impose conditions for cycle and vehicle parking, vehicular signage and visibility splays in the interests of highway safety.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons set out above the appeal is allowed and prior approval is deemed to be granted.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development shall not be occupied until visibility splays of 2.4m x 37m to the west and 2.4m x 120m to the east at the site exit have been provided and shall be free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m in height and shall be retained as such thereafter.
- 2) The development shall not be occupied until details of the markings and signage for vehicles entering and exiting the site have been first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and retained for the lifetime of the development.
- 3) The development shall not be occupied until the turning and parking areas have been carried out in accordance with a scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These areas shall thereafter be kept available for those purposes only.
- 4) The development shall not be occupied until space has been laid out within the site for bicycles to be stored in accordance with a scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. That space shall thereafter be kept available for the storage of bicycles.