



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2026

by S Ramsden BSc (Hons) MA MA IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 May 2026

Appeal Ref: 6003820

10 Mitchell Way, Woodley, Reading RG5 4NQ

- 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 Mr Allwyn Fernandes against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 252343.
 - The development proposed is for the change of use of amenity land (which is part of their land) to residential garden including alterations to boundary fence, plus single storey rear extension and changes to front fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of amenity land (which is part of their land) to residential garden including alterations to boundary fence, plus single storey rear extension and changes to front fenestration at 10 Mitchell Way, Woodley, Reading RG5 4NQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 252343, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description above is taken from the application form, however I have inserted the word “extension” as a more accurate description of the development.

Main Issues

3. The Council has raised no objection in respect of the proposed rear extension and changes to fenestration. Based on the information before me, and my observations on site, I see no reason to disagree. Accordingly, the main issues are:
 - the effect of the change of use of the land to residential garden and the proposed boundary fence on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and,
 - the effect of the proposed alterations to the boundary fence on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a modern, two-storey detached house, on a corner plot in an established residential area. To the front it is open to the street and set back behind a hard landscaped area and parking spaces. Immediately to the side of the house is a thin strip of land enclosed by a high boundary fence, leading to an enclosed garden to the rear of the property. Alongside this and running alongside

Dowding Close is an open area, comprising a grass verge between the pavement and the flank wall of the house. It contains some shrubs and two trees.

5. The surrounding area is characterised by dwellings of a similar age and nature. The more immediate area consists of closely spaced houses, clustered informally around short cul-de-sacs, predominantly with open gardens and parking spaces to the front and enclosed gardens to the rear. There are also a number of verges and grassed amenity spaces interspersed within the irregular street layout.
6. At my site visit I observed that there is a variety of relationships between properties and roads. This was particularly evident at corner plots, where some plots are open to the street and other sites are enclosed by boundary fences. In other instances, rear garden boundary fences follow the back of the pavement line to the street behind, although not all boundary treatments follow the alignment of the footways. There is, accordingly, a changing sense of openness and enclosure within the surrounding streetscapes, and between hard and soft landscaping within the public realm.
7. The proposed development includes partial realignment of the fence at the side of the house, with it stepping out to enclose a portion of the open area running alongside Dowding Close. The space to the side of the appeal dwelling contributes to a sense of openness at the junction of Mitchell Way and Dowding Close, as well as providing views along the north side of Dowding Close. Its soft landscaping provides visual amenity, as well as providing a degree of visual continuity along the street, as the open verge gives way to the open front gardens of the houses beyond. Both qualities contrast with the high walls and fences to the back of the pavement edge on the south side of Dowding Close, which are prominent in the street scene.
8. The proposed stepped alignment of the fence would restrict those views to some degree and impact on the sense of openness, although much of this area towards the front and rear of the appeal dwelling would remain unchanged. Furthermore, the surrounding area is characterised by a changing sense of openness and enclosure to the streetscape and by a variety of relationships between properties and roadways, particularly on corner plots; in that context the proposed development would not appear out of place.
9. Although the width of the landscaped area would be reduced alongside part of the house, the boundary fence would remain set back from the back of the pavement edge, albeit to a limited extent. This would allow a degree of visual continuity to the soft landscaping to the north side of Dowding Close, in counterpoint to the existing boundary treatment to the south side of this highway. Maintaining an appropriate soft landscape planting along the remaining verge would be necessary to ensure that the appropriate degree of visual amenity is maintained and this could be secured through a planning condition.
10. For these reasons, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area from the proposed development. Therefore I find no conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (the Core Strategy), 2010, and Policies CC03 and TB21 of the Wokingham Borough Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, 2014, which taken together seek to ensure high quality built and landscape design which enhances local character. Similarly, the proposed development

accords with the general advice in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the National Design Guide, 2021, and the Council's Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, 2012.

Highway safety

11. The proposed general alignment of the boundary fence to the side of the house is shown on the Block Plan. It would not project forward of the building line of the front porch of the host dwelling, and the majority of the front boundary of the appeal site would remain open to the pavement.
12. Based on this drawing and my observations on site, the proposed changes to the alignment of the boundary fence would not appear to have a harmful impact on the existing visibility splay for road users approaching the junction of Dowding Close and Mitchell Way, nor would it unacceptably impact on their view of vehicles entering or leaving the appeal site.
13. Dowding Close is a short residential cul-de-sac with a number of right angled bends, and vehicles would be likely to be approaching the junction with Mitchell Way at low speeds. The proposed fence would have some impact on the visibility of drivers as they leave the appeal property: however, they would be joining the public highway from a stationary position, and would therefore also be travelling at a low speed. This would allow drivers sufficient time to react to any passing vehicles on the road or pedestrians using the footway, and vice versa; particularly given that the boundary to the front of the appeal site is largely open.
14. Given these circumstances, I do not find that the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. I therefore find no conflict with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 of the Core Strategy, which taken together seek to ensure that development enhances road safety and does not cause highway problems.
15. I also find no conflict with section 9 of the Framework which states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Conditions

16. I have considered the Council's list of suggested conditions in light of advice in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. Where necessary and in the interests of precision and brevity I have amended the wording of conditions.
17. In addition to the standard time condition, I have imposed a condition requiring that the development is carried out following the approved plans, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. I have also imposed a condition requiring materials to match those used on the existing dwelling and boundary treatment in order to maintain the character and appearance of the area.
18. In the interests of visual amenity, and in order to provide a continuity of soft landscaping along Dowding Close, I have imposed a condition requiring landscaping details to be agreed for the remaining area of amenity land outside the enclosed residential garden.
19. The Council has suggested a condition relating to the provision of the visibility splay; however, I have not found that the proposed realignment of the fence would

impact on highway safety. Furthermore, I am not convinced that the dimensions suggested for the visibility splay suggested by the Council are currently achieved. There is therefore no need to impose such a condition.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, along with other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to conditions.

S Ramsden

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos. P1646-01, P1646-02 and P1646-03.
- 3) Except where stated otherwise on the approved drawings, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension, and the re-aligned fencing, hereby permitted shall be of similar appearance to those used in the existing building and the existing fence.
- 4) Prior to any re-alignment of the fencing hereby permitted a scheme of landscaping for the area of amenity land outside the enclosed residential garden to the side of the house shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscaping scheme shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the re-alignment of the fencing. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting (or within a period of 5 years of the re-alignment of the fencing in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*****END OF CONDITIONS*****