



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2026

by **D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/25/3375029

1 Halstead Close, Woodley, Wokingham RG5 4LD

- 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 and Mrs Haseeb Mahmood against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 251470.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension followed by division to create two separate dwellings with associated parking and amenity space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor side extension followed by division to create two separate dwellings with associated parking and amenity space at 1 Halstead Close, Woodley, Wokingham RG5 4LD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 251470, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellant submitted amended documents and plans with the appeal which include Automatic Traffic Counter Results, Drawing No R-25-0169/HY02 Visibility Splay and Drawing No R-25-0169/HY01 Pedestrian Visibility Splay. The Council had the opportunity to comment on the amended documents and plans which have not resulted in any significant changes to the proposed scheme, instead they have provided clarification. Accordingly, I am satisfied that no one would be prejudiced were my decision to have had regard to the amended documents and plans.
3. The Council refers to the emerging Wokingham Borough Council Right Homes, Right Places Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023 – 2040 Proposed Submission Plan (the Emerging Local Plan), currently at Regulation 22 stage. While the Council has indicated the weight to be attributed to the emerging policies, I have limited information on the emerging plan's status, including any interim findings or main modifications. This leaves uncertainty as to the degree to which the emerging policies may change. I have not been directed to any particular circumstances that indicate the emerging policies would fundamentally change the approach to the main issue in this appeal. Consequently, the Emerging Plan carries limited weight, and the primary policy consideration is the statutory development plan.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on highway and pedestrian safety.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a large parcel of land which contains a moderately sized end-of-terrace two storey dwelling. The dwelling is located in a corner position and has a large driveway which extends across the frontage of the appeal site, adjacent to the highway.
6. The proposed development would extend the existing dwelling and sub-divide the appeal site to create a new dwelling. The proposed dwelling would have an independent access with off-road parking provision which is proposed to be accessed by a new dropped kerb.
7. Halstead Close is a residential cul-de-sac which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Some roadside parking is possible towards the end of the cul-de-sac, however, the section of the road from the junction of Headley Road has parking restrictions which prevents parking at all times.
8. Since the Council determined the planning application the appellant installed an automatic traffic counter which found that the 85th percentile speed was 15.6mph and there was an average of 119 two-way vehicle movements per day.
9. Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 ('MfS', 'MfS2') represent guidance which should be applied with due flexibility. These set out that in certain circumstances a minimum X distance of two metres may be considered, and that 'unless there is local evidence to the contrary, a reduction in visibility below recommended levels will not necessarily lead to a significant problem'. On this basis, the appellant considers that a visibility splay of 2.4m by 13m to the east of the access can be provided and is appropriate for the appeal site.
10. The Council consider that while it is reasonable to accept that the appeal site is a slow-speed area and therefore accept a reduction in visibility splay requirement, that visibility splays should be no worse than existing and there is no sufficient justification to demonstrate that the bonnet length should not be taken into account.
11. The Council consider that visibility splays would be worse than the existing situation. However, the existing dwelling already has four off street parking spaces that are served by an existing dropped kerb which does not extend across the whole frontage. In this regard, any cars parked within the two spaces nearest to the bend would have to enter and exit the appeal site at an angle, meaning that pedestrians or vehicles could travel around the bend whilst these manoeuvres were taking place. The proposed extension of the dropped kerb would allow vehicles to enter and exit at a 90-degree angle, which would be an improvement over the existing situation.
12. There is limited justification from the Council as to why bonnet lengths should be taken into account. Instead, adjustments for bonnet length would be most relevant to forward visibility and I am mindful that vehicles leaving the appeal site would be stationary. It is also noted that vehicle speeds are low and there is no record of any collisions meaning that it is unlikely to be any harmful conflict with pedestrians or other road users.

13. The Council state that pedestrian visibility has not been assessed correctly and consider that the footways accommodate active movements and vulnerable pedestrians due to the proximity to a park. I have no reason to dispute the use of the footways, however, while the pedestrian visibility may not have been addressed correctly, there is limited evidence to suggest that the required pedestrian visibility could not be achieved, and I am satisfied that this could be demonstrated and secured through a suitably worded planning condition.
14. The Council consider that the proposed visibility splays cannot be achieved on site and the Council, have annotated the appellants plans to this effect. I note the Council's concerns; however, I have limited information before me to suggest that the proposed visibility splays could not be achieved, and I am mindful that this could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition which would enable the Council to check compliance.
15. Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Taking the above matters into account, I am satisfied that visibility would be improved from the current situation on site and that appropriate visibility splays can be incorporated into the proposed development, which combined with the generally low speeds and cautious use of the road and footways would mean that there would not be an unacceptable impact on highway or pedestrian safety.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not unacceptably harm highway and pedestrian safety. I find no conflict with Policy CP6 of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document January 2010 and CC07 of the Wokingham Borough Development Plan Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Enhancing the Borough's environment and character through exceptional development February 2014 and paragraphs 115 and 116 of the Framework. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that developments do not cause highway problems.

Other Matter

17. The Council raise concern over whether cycle parking could be provided and how direct access could be achieved to each dwelling. However, I am mindful that this could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

Conditions

18. Condition 1 is the standard condition that relates to the commencement of development and condition 2 specifies the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. Conditions 3 and 4 are necessary in order to secure details of parking for vehicles and cycles to be submitted to and approved by the Council in the interests of highway safety and encouraging sustainable means of travel.
19. Condition 5 is necessary in order to ensure a landscaping plan is submitted and approved by the Council as well as implemented on site in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. Condition 6 is necessary to secure biodiversity improvements.

20. Condition 7 is necessary in order to ensure that the front window of the outbuilding is blocked up in order to protect the living conditions of future occupiers. Condition 8 is necessary to ensure that details of the proposed access are submitted to and approved by the Council in the interests of highway safety. Condition 9 is necessary to ensure that the materials used in the proposed development to match those on the existing dwelling in order to protect the character and appearance of the area.
21. Planning Practice Guidance states that care should be taken when considering using pre-commencement conditions. In this regard, I have found clear justification that conditions 3 and 4 are necessary to be pre-commencement conditions as the agreement of details for these matters are needed prior to the commencement of development as they will form part of the initial works.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos:

Location Plan

P/MAH/2025/008 Existing & Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations (Landscaping)

3. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, details of off-street parking space within the site for two vehicles. The dwelling shall not be occupied until the parking space so-approved has been provided in full accordance with the approved details. The parking space shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.
4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/parking facilities for the occupants of and visitors to the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.
5. Prior to the first occupation or use of the development hereby permitted there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which 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 occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings 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.

6. Prior to the first occupation or use of the development hereby permitted, details of biodiversity enhancements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The biodiversity enhancements shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the development and shall thereafter be retained as approved.

7. Prior to the first occupation or use of the dwelling hereby permitted, the window on the front elevation of the existing Storage Room outbuilding shall be blocked up in accordance with approved drawing numbered P/MAH/2025/008 and shall thereafter be retained as approved.
8. The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the access has been constructed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
9. Except where stated otherwise on the approved drawings and application form, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be of similar appearance to those used in the existing building, unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

End of Schedule