
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2026

by **C Rose BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6002060

Five Ten Apartments, Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham RG41 5PX

- 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 20, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mark Weaver against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 250594.
The development proposed is erection of 3no. dwellings forming apartments (following removal of existing apartment) through upwards extension to existing detached block of flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the application form as neither party has provided written confirmation that a revised description has been agreed.
3. The appeal is made pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 20, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GPDO). This permits development consisting of works for the construction of up to two additional storeys of new dwellinghouses immediately above the existing topmost residential storey on a building which is a purpose-built block of flats, as well as certain associated works.
4. Development is permitted by Class A subject to the limitations set out in paragraph A.1 and the conditions set out at paragraph A.2, which include matters in respect of which the developer must apply to the local planning authority for approval.
5. The Council does not indicate the proposal is contrary to the limitations in paragraph A.1 and I have no reason to disagree. In refusing the application, the Council's decision notice states that the proposed development would be contrary to conditions A.2(1)(e) and (g) which requires prior approval of the external appearance of the building and impact on the amenity of existing building and neighbouring premises including overlooking, privacy and loss of light. The Council do not indicate that the proposal is contrary to the other conditions under A.2 (1), and I have no reason to disagree.
6. The prior approval process does not require that a proposed development be assessed against the development plan. I have therefore had regard to the policies only insofar as they are material to the matter for which prior approval is sought.

Main Issues

7. In light of the Preliminary Matters above, the main issues are whether prior approval should be granted having regard to:
- the external appearance of the building; and,
 - the impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No's 508 and 512 Reading Road with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Appearance of the building

8. The appeal building is a purpose built two storey building comprising flats with rooms in the roof located within a row of residential properties off Reading Road following a similar building line. It sits in its own grounds with car parking to the front and car parking and outdoor space to the rear.
9. The prevailing character around the appeal site is of one and two storey buildings with pitched roofs that sit within well sized plots. Some of the properties have rooms in their roofs. While Five Ten Apartments (Five Ten) has a greater bulk and presence than many of the neighbouring buildings, its height, which is at the higher end for properties in the immediate area, is not too dissimilar to the two-storey pitched roofed buildings and helps to limit the extent of any disparity. As such, the building does not unduly detract from the spacious and suburban character of the area. Furthermore, for the same reasons Five Ten does not draw undue attention to itself and does not act as a landmark even though it is located next to a public footpath.
10. The proposal would add an additional storey to the appeal building. The additional floor would mirror the existing floors and as a result would do little to prevent the full extent of the additional storey being evident from Reading Road to its frontage, the adjacent footpath and Chatsworth Avenue to the rear. Although the existing landscaping to the site would screen the building from some viewpoints along Reading Road and Chatsworth Avenue, it would not sufficiently screen views through its entrance, on approach along Reading Road or from the adjacent public footpath. Moreover, I cannot be sure that any planting would be retained in perpetuity.
11. As a result, and given that the building extends very close to its side boundaries, the building's height, scale and bulk would be noticeably increased. This would create an incongruity with the prevailing environment and would be particularly evident and discordant when viewed from Reading Road in the context of the adjacent bungalow forming No.508 Reading Road.
12. With regard to its detailed design, the new storey seeks to replicate the fenestration pattern of the floors below, which have a uniformity of sizing and position. Despite this, and despite the use of similar materials, this would not overcome the resulting building appearing at odds with the prevailing character of the area by reason of its scale and height.
13. There are a small number of taller three-storey buildings to parts of Reading Road, but these buildings are not reflective of, and do not sit within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site. As such, they are not readily viewed in association with the

appeal site, do not form part of its immediate setting or character and would not result in the proposal being read as a suitable evolution of the character of the area.

14. I have had regard to the proposal optimising the potential for the site and making a more efficient use of the land in accordance with Paragraph 135(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, this does not relate to the prior approval matters under consideration and does not address or overcome the harm identified above to the external appearance of the building.
15. I acknowledge that there would inevitably be some impact upon the surrounding area by virtue of Class A to this part of the GPDO allowing the construction of additional storeys, and that some differences in building heights are common within urban areas. Nonetheless, this is subject to an assessment of effect of the proposal's external appearance and in this instance, it would fundamentally alter its relationship with its surroundings as the building would become a jarring and incongruous feature within the street scene. As such, I conclude that the external appearance of the building would cause a significantly harmful effect.
16. Insofar as it is material, the proposal would conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Document (Adopted – 29 January 2010) (CS) and R1 of the Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document June 2012 (SPD). Amongst other things, these state that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, are of an appropriate mass, built form, height and character to the area and contribute positively to the underlying character and quality of the local area. In so far as it is material, the proposal would also be inconsistent with the provisions of Section 12 of the Framework which, amongst other things, seeks to achieve well-designed places.

Living conditions

17. The appeal site is immediately adjacent to No.508 Reading Road (No.508) that comprises a bungalow. To the opposite side of the appeal site is a relatively narrow pedestrian path that links Reading Road with Chatsworth Avenue to the rear. Adjoining the path is No.512 Reading Road (No.512), a semi-detached two-storey dwelling.
18. Due to Five Ten being immediately alongside the built form to No's 508 and 512, given the south-westerly facing rear gardens, and given the minimal number and proportion of new windows proposed to the side elevations of Five Ten, the development would not result in any additional harmful overlooking, overshadowing or loss of light to No's 508 and 512. Furthermore, there would be no detrimental harm from the rear outlook within both buildings due to the relative positions of the buildings.
19. However, due to the existing height of Five Ten and its position close to the side boundary of No.508 and given its single-storey nature, from the rear garden to No.508, Five Ten already has a modest overbearing impact. Given this context, the additional increase in the building's height would be significant and result in a markedly greater overbearing effect on the rear garden to the neighbouring bungalow. This impact would be intensified by the limited separation distances and the pronounced disparity in scale between the properties despite no increase in the

footprint of Five Ten. The resulting level of dominance would be unacceptable and would cause harm to the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers at No.508.

20. Furthermore, and although No.512 is separated from the appeal site by a pedestrian path and there would be no increase in the footprint of the building, Five Ten extends considerably beyond the rear elevation of No.512 in fairly close proximity. As a result, from the rear garden of No.512 in particular, Five Ten already has a visually imposing presence. The addition of a further storey would intensify the building's already imposing presence with the resulting level of dominance harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of No.512.
21. Even acknowledging that the GPDO allows for the construction of upper floors, for the above reasons, I conclude that there would be a significantly harmful impact from the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No's 508 and 512 Reading Road with particular regard to outlook.
22. Insofar as it is material, the proposal would conflict with CS Policies CP1 and CP3 and R23 of the SPD. Amongst other things, these state that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment, are of a high quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life and relate well to neighbouring properties. In so far as it is material, the proposal would also be inconsistent with Paragraph 135(f) of the Framework which, amongst other things, seeks a good standard of amenity for existing users.

Conclusion

23. I have concluded that the proposed development would fail to comply with Conditions A.2.1(e) and (g) of Schedule 2, Part 20, Class A of the GPDO.
24. For the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Rose

INSPECTOR