
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2026

by R Standfield BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6009258

9 Union Street, Ramsbury, Wiltshire SN8 2PR

- 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 Lee Davies against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/09209.
 - The development proposed is off street parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) was updated 17 August 2026. Insofar as the contents are relevant to this appeal, the NPPF remains broadly consistent, therefore, I am satisfied no party would be disadvantaged by not having the opportunity to comment on the revised NPPF.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, taking into account whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ramsbury Conservation Area (RCA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located in the village of Ramsbury on the eastern side of an historic rural lane, Union Street, which features a substantial earthen bank upon which dwellings are positioned, set back from the highway. The street is incorporated within the RCA, the Statement for which highlights the embankment, trees and hedging as characteristic features which contribute positively to this part of the conservation area.
5. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The significance of the RCA is due to its ecclesiastical relationship with nearby Salisbury together with its landscape setting and development on the line of the London to Bristol coaching route. This has informed its historical layout and pattern of historically important buildings.
6. The RCA Statement (2023) also notes the historic structure of streets, buildings and footways that no longer reflect levels of car ownership and the conflict that has consequently arisen. The narrowness of Union Street prevents any on street

parking although two dwellings have created slim parking bays that are partially set in. Off road parking is provided at a number of dwellings with two key sections cut out of the embankment serving three dwellings. Residents who do not have parking on site are able to park in the surrounding streets, notably Whittonditch Road to the north and Newtown Road to the south.

7. Dwellings to the western side of Union Street are not subject to the same change in ground level and are both more visible and accessible from the highway.
8. The embankment, as a distinctive landscaping feature, is most pronounced towards the northern and southern ends of Union Street where it retains a verdant and attractive enclosure of the highway. The central section has been subject to excavation for vehicular access points as noted above and reinforced with retaining walls however still contributes positively to the street scene and largely maintains the rural aesthetic and sense of enclosure. Previous applications for off road parking at the site have been referenced by the Council although no details have been provided and I am therefore unable to assess any degree of comparability with the current appeal. In any event, appeal decisions must be made on the basis of the merits of each individual case.
9. The excavation required to provide the proposed parking space would be narrow and deep. Whilst this would minimise the impact upon the longer views up and down the street, within the vicinity of the site the impact would be pronounced. The visibility splays and excavation would result in a noticeable change in enclosure and the proposed floor scape, with an entrance strip of porous blocks, would increase visual prominence. Whilst the proposed development would result in the loss of only a small part of the overall embankment, the feature, noted for its distinctiveness, would be harmed and the proposal would undermine the positive contribution that the embankment makes to the character and appearance of the RCA.
10. My attention has been drawn to the existing driveways and cut-in lay-by that have already affected the embankment to the eastern side of Union Street. I have not been provided with the details of these projects or the circumstances for the consideration of each scheme. However, having observed each of these during my site visit, four driveways appear to have been provided as part of dwelling construction and all of these, plus the layby appear to pre-date the publication of the RCA Statement in 2023 which provides the character assessment for the conservation area and identifies the embankment as an important feature.
11. As such, I afford these examples limited weight and I am not persuaded that the cumulative impact within the immediate locality of the appeal site wouldn't further erode the quality of the street scene and undermine the ambitions of the Council to protect the embankment as it stands currently. In any case, examples of where a noteworthy feature of a conservation area has previously been adversely affected is not a good reason to perpetuate this harm.
12. Policy HE6 1 of the NPPF states that substantial weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and in HE6 4, any harm to, or loss of, the significance of such an asset requires clear and convincing justification along with an assessment of the harm weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal.

13. In this instance, there would be some temporary economic benefits associated with the engineering works and creation of the parking space. The reduction in overspill street parking to the appearance of the conservation area represents a small benefit to the wider public in relation to economic, social and environmental objectives. However, this would be at the expense of a part of the conservation area that holds significance, and I am therefore not persuaded that the public benefits would be of sufficient magnitude to outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and the considerable importance this carries.
14. Therefore, the harm that would be caused to the significance of the RCA lacks clear and convincing justification. The public benefits, taken as a whole, would not outweigh the substantial weight that the conservation of designated heritage assets carries.
15. It would thus be contrary to Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) which seek to ensure appropriate design quality and preservation of heritage assets. It would also fail to meet the requirements of part II section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Chapter 20 of the NPPF, which collectively require development to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Other Considerations

16. The site is within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. This is a protected landscape, and I have a duty to seek to further its statutory purposes which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. In this case, given the nature and location of the development, it would leave the natural beauty of the National Landscape unharmed, and the duty is thereby discharged.
17. The ability to charge an electric vehicle has also been presented as a future opportunity at the site. Whilst a potential benefit, there are alternative means for electric car charging available to public users and this factor is therefore not determinative.
18. The appellants have put forward a need for the parking space within close proximity of their home to support a family member who holds a blue badge due to limited mobility. Further, a number of interested parties have submitted representations in support of the proposal, noting the need of the family member and the lack of on street parking availability. I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010, and the clear personal benefit to the family member enabling improved and safer access to the home. However, in this instance, the permanent harm to the designated heritage asset caused by the proposed development outweighs its benefits in terms of eliminating discrimination against persons with protected characteristics, advancing equality of opportunity for those persons and fostering good relations between them and others. I conclude that it is proportionate and necessary to dismiss the appeal.

Conclusion

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

R Standfield

INSPECTOR