



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2023

by David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/23/3321474

Medway, Guildford Road, Knaphill, Chobham, WOKING, GU24 8EA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr K Bingham and Ms A Underwood against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2023/0173, dated 23 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a double garage with double doors to the front and a single door and window to the side.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow which lies in a short ribbon of similar properties with open fields on the other (eastern) side of Guildford Road. The front garden is mostly a gravel surface and the borders contain shrubs and an evergreen tree. The site lies in the Green Belt. It is proposed to erect a double garage with a low-pitched roof on the northern edge of this space.

Effect on openness

4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates in paragraph 149 that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as 'inappropriate development' unless one of the exceptions apply. In this case the existing dwelling does not lie in a village nor is the proposal an extension or replacement to an existing building therefore the proposal does not fall within one of the stated exceptions in this paragraph. The erection of the double garage therefore has to be regarded as inappropriate development.
5. In terms of the effect on openness, I acknowledge that it would not be a large structure and that it has been designed with elevations of timber boarding to give it a rustic appearance. Its position in the front garden would also be partly screened by existing landscaping and this could be retained and expanded by condition. Nevertheless, the building would be visible to the public realm and its physical volume would have both a visual and spatial adverse effect on the openness of the area.

6. I acknowledge that the proposed double garage would only have a limited visual effect on the character of the area and would not harm the amenity of neighbours as the appellants' agent asserts. However, these are different issues compared to the effect on openness.
7. Overall, I find that the new building proposed constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and harms its openness. Substantial weight has to be given to this harm. The proposal therefore conflicts with the provisions of section 13 of the Framework, Policy CS6 of the Woking Core Strategy and Policy DM13 of the Woking Development Management Policies DPD. This conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by any other considerations and this indicates that the appeal should not be allowed.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Murray

INSPECTOR