



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 April 2024

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20.05.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3333270

Pinewood, Guildford Road, Effingham, Surrey, KT24 5QF.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal of to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs G. Evangelos against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/P/01169, dated 5 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 30 August 2023.
 - The development is the erection of a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The planning application the subject of this appeal was determined on the 30 August 2023, prior to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) being updated on 20 December 2023. I have adopted the paragraph numbers in the 20 December 2023 update in my deliberations below.
3. The Council's decision letter describes the garage as retrospective. It is clear from the evidence provided and my site visit that the garage has been erected onsite. I shall determine the appeal on this basis accordingly.

Main Issue

4. I consider the main issues in this case to be:
 - a) whether the garage constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - c) if it is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether the garage constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt

5. Pinewood is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. The site comprises an irregular shaped plot of land with vehicular access to both the A264 Guildford

Road at the front and Salmonds Road to the rear. The house being located close to the A264.

6. The appellants have erected a detached single storey garage. The garage which I saw has already been built is located on the widest part of the site approximately halfway between the front and rear boundaries, and about 90 metres or so from the house. As noted by the Council there is an existing pergola structure and other domestic paraphernalia situated in the vicinity of the garage.
7. The Framework indicates that, with some exceptions, the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt. The construction of detached buildings ancillary to a dwelling is not one of the exceptions identified.
8. The appellants contend that the garage could be considered as a normal domestic adjunct and therefore treated as an extension. Paragraph 154 c) of the Framework states that one of the exceptions is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. I do not doubt that a garage would have an integral functional link to the host property. Further, it is relatively modest in scale compared to the host property. However, given the significant separation distance between the proposed garage and the house I do not consider it to fall to be considered as a normal domestic adjunct in this case.
9. I conclude that the garage is inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Framework indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Effect on the openness of the Green Belt

10. Openness has both spatial and visual aspects. In this case the appeal site has a sense of both spaciousness and openness that contributes to the semi-rural setting of the rear of the property.
11. The garage is located in the north-west corner of the appeal site where the two narrow strips of land open up. The garage is positioned against existing hedges which afford it some screening. However, it has been built on artificially raised ground making it more open to view from surrounding area.
12. The introduction of a building here has a significant impact on openness, both in spatial and visual terms, resulting in a clear intrusion into the area. This harms the openness of this part of the Green Belt and conflicts with the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy which is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

Other considerations

13. I appreciate that the property does not currently have a garage, and a garage would address the appellants need for both garaging and additional domestic storage. Although no details have been given, I also note that planning permission was previously granted for a garage in 1992. While I appreciate the appellants need for a garage, and indeed whatever the circumstances surrounding the previous approval, I have considered this scheme on its individual planning merits. Accordingly, I give these matters little weight overall.

14. The appellants maintain that if the garage were to be built closer to the main house it would fall to be considered as permitted development. There is no evidence of a real prospect that such a development would be implemented. Further, given the distance to the proposed access from Salmonds Road to the rear it does not seem to be a practical solution in this case. Furthermore, the creation of a necessary new driveway and hardstanding further impacts on the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly, I give this consideration limited weight in support of the development
15. The appellants have drawn my attention to an appeal decision in the district of Mole Valley Ref: APP/C3620/D/20/3261847 allowing a detached garage. The Inspector found in that case that due to the relatively modest scale, sympathetic siting and relationship to the host dwelling the effect of the garage would be minimal and overall, the impact on openness would not result in harm. I do not consider that the two developments are directly comparable in terms of, along with other things, distance from the host property, the size of the main dwelling, overall footprint of the garage and its elevated siting. In any case I have considered this development on its individual planning merits. I therefor afford this matter little weight in the planning balance.
16. I appreciate that if the garage were demolished, even with care, some materials may not be able to be re-cycled and others like brick and block work might only be useful for alternative uses, such as hardcore. Whatever the prevailing situation, I consider that the harm to the Green Belt of the garage outweighs the short-term waste of materials already committed to the project. Accordingly, I give this consideration very limited weight in support of this development.
17. The proposed garage constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No very special circumstances have been demonstrated which clearly outweighs the inherent harm to the Green Belt. The development therefore fails to accord with Section 13 *Protecting Green Belt Land* of the Framework and Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (Adopted 25 April 2019).

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR