



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2025

by **H Miles BA (hons), MA, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/24/3347108

Chart Edge, Caxton Lane, Limsfield, Surrey RH8 0TD

- 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 Fletcher against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2023/1395.
 - The development proposed is removal of existing conservatory and side garage and the addition of a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies.
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area including with regard to the Area of Great Landscape Value

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The Framework sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Framework goes on to state that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt. Development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, and thus should be approved only if very special circumstances exist, unless they come within one of the exceptions in the Framework.
4. Of relevance to this appeal, paragraph 154c) provides an exception for 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. This is broadly echoed by policies DP10 and DP13 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014-2029 (2014) (LP). This exception relates to whether the total of existing and proposed extensions to the original building would be disproportionate in size. It does not include the visual impact of the proposal or a specific consideration of openness.

5. Whilst officers refer to a 40% increase being acceptable as a rule of thumb, the supporting text to Policy DP13 of the LP explains that in determining what is a disproportionate addition, each proposal will be judged on its individual merits, with external volume as a measure, but also taking into account factors including the size of the original building, bulk, height and mass. I have considered the appeal on this basis.
6. It is agreed that the volume of the original dwelling was around 764cu.m. The development proposes a two storey addition to the eastern elevation of the building. It would be flush with the front and rear elevations and continue the existing ridge and eaves height from the host property. The volume of the proposed extension is said to be 225cu.m.
7. The proposed development would also involve the demolition of an existing garage and conservatory. In combination the previously approved additions have a volume of around 283cu.m. with 152cu.m. to be demolished. However, the appellant states that this figure does not include the recent southern kitchen extension and roof above. The resultant dwelling, taking into account the proposed demolitions would therefore be around a 44- 47% increase in volume from the original dwelling.
8. In addition, the proposed two storey extension would replace two existing single storey additions and would therefore reduce the increase of the footprint of the original dwelling by 21sq.m. and the width by 4m. As such the bulk and mass of the proposed extension would be limited in this context.
9. Considering the limited mass, along with the extent of the increase in volume, overall, based on the evidence in this particular case, the proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
10. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt in the terms of the Framework and policies DP10 and DP13 of the LP.
11. Given my findings above there is no need to consider the scheme against paragraph 154g) of the Framework. Furthermore, the impact on openness is implicitly taken into account in the exception under paragraph 154c). Therefore, there is no requirement to assess the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and Appearance

12. The appeal site is within the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) an area which acts as a buffer to protect the national landscape and views from and into it. Policy CSP20 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) (CS) requires that the principles to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape will apply in this area. In addition, Policy CSP21 of the CS also requires protection of the character and distinctiveness of the district's landscapes. The site is within the Wooded Greensand Hills Local Character Area. Of relevance to this main issue this area is characterised by detached houses with large gardens with broadly consistent but individually varied architectural styling with a generally high quality design of buildings. The site is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Candidate Area for possible future designation, however there is no evidence

before me that this site is currently part of the National Landscape and I have considered the appeal on this basis.

13. Chart Edge is a large property set in generous grounds. The property appears with a central main section with projecting gable, and two wings with hipped pitched roofs angled away from the frontage. Each of these wings has been extended with a single storey conservatory to the east and an extension including a garage to the west. The extensions are modest and, their materials, size, and scale are appropriate to the host dwelling. To the rear the fenestration is broadly uniform, aside from the ground floor windows to the secondary additions, and to the front windows are generally small with a vertical emphasis. This results in an interesting layout, attractive symmetry contributing to a high quality design to the host dwelling which is clearly apparent through the height and subservience of the subsequent extensions.
14. The proposed extension would be in place of the existing conservatory and would be two storeys at the same height as the main ridge and flush with the front and rear elevations of the main part of the house. The roof would be pitched with a gable end to the side elevation. To the rear, large glazed windows and doors are proposed at ground and first floor, with wide windows to the frontage.
15. Due to its height, siting and roof form the extension for which permission is sought would not be secondary to the main dwelling. The proposed scale in this location would result in a building which appears unbalanced. This would be the case notwithstanding that the materials would match the existing and that the arced layout would remain. Whilst windows would be provided to the side wing, the proposed fenestration would have a horizontal emphasis with limited alignment between the ground and first floors to the frontage and would be at odds with the broadly consistent character of the windows on the remainder of the property. This would further emphasise the discordant appearance of the proposed extension. Given the findings that the appearance of the garage is appropriate, there would not be a benefit to character and appearance associated with its removal. Consequently, the appeal scheme would harmfully undermine the attractive symmetry and appearance of Chart House and would result in a visually jarring building. This would unacceptably erode the individual architectural styling and high quality design of this property which would be harmful to the character and appearance of built form in the AGLV.
16. Whilst the detailing of the windows would be inappropriate, nevertheless taking into account that this would be an extension to an existing residential property, and that it would replace a mainly glazed conservatory, the effect on lightspill would be limited.
17. The property and the proposed extension are well screened from the road and from neighbouring properties by landscaping and the steep incline of the site. Due to the arced layout the extension would also be further back from the road than the main front elevation. However, although the resultant building would not be readily visible from public vantage points, due to the topography of the site it is likely to be somewhat visible in the open countryside land to the rear. As such, there would be harm to the AGLV as a result of the inappropriate appearance of the resultant dwelling and the proposed development would not conserve and enhance the special landscape character of the locality.

18. Therefore, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, including the AGLV. This would be contrary to Policy DP7 of the LP which requires that development is of a high quality design that reflects local context and landscape character and policies CSP20 and CSP21 of the CS, the aims of which are set out above.

Conclusion

19. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Miles

INSPECTOR