



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2025

by V Simpson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/24/3349594

Park Barn Farm, Wisley Common, Wisley, Surrey GU23 6QS

- 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 R Alderson against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/P/02022.
 - The development proposed is described as retrospective application for the demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of outbuilding containing garage at ground floor with storage space in the roofspace.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of outbuilding containing garage at ground floor with storage space in the roofspace at Park Barn Farm, Woking, GU23 6QS, in accordance with the terms of the application, ref 23/P/02022, and plan numbers; J004688-DD-01; J004688-DD-02; and J-004688-DD-03.

Preliminary Matters

2. On the application form, the works were described as 'retrospective', and it was indicated that the development had been completed. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, I have no reason to find differently. I therefore proceed on the basis that the works have been completed. Nevertheless, those words that do not describe the development are not included in the wording of the formal decision.
3. The main parties have been invited to consider whether the December 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has relevance to their cases. I have considered any responses received.

Background and Main Issue

4. The appeal site is within the Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
5. The main issue is whether the scheme is inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies.

Reasons

6. The appeal site forms part of a wider land holding at Park Barn Farm. Although the site is within the countryside, it is close to a large dwelling and a series of other

buildings. At the time of my site visit, 2 cars and a small utility vehicle were parked within the new outbuilding subject of this appeal.

7. Framework paragraph 154 states that development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless one of a number of stated exceptions apply. The exception at 154. g) is; limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
8. Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough – Guildford Borough Local Plan strategy and sites 2015-2034 – adopted 25 April 2019 (the Local Plan) indicates that the Green Belt will be protected against inappropriate development in accordance with the Framework. It also says that unless new buildings in the Green Belt would conform with one of the exceptions identified within the Framework, then they would constitute inappropriate development. As such, for this appeal, and in respect of matters related to the Green Belt, Local Plan policy P2 broadly conforms with the provisions of the Framework.
9. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, I have no reason to doubt the appellant's claim that the appeal site constitutes previously developed land (PDL). I therefore proceed on the basis that it is. That being the case, whether the development causes substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt will determine its conformity with the exception at Framework paragraph 154. g).
10. Detailed plans of the former outbuilding have not been provided. However, a historic image of the site has been supplied. The location and footprint of the outbuilding on that image, broadly correlates with the detail shown on the submitted plans. Together, these indicate that the former outbuilding had a modest footprint and that it was a low structure with either a flat or a shallow-pitched roof. The new outbuilding which has replaced this small and simply formed structure has a larger footprint. A first-floor storage area has also been provided within the space formed by a fairly steep dual-pitched roof with dormer windows. Although not large when compared with several other nearby buildings, the scale of the new outbuilding is undoubtedly greater than the previous building. Consequently, both visually and spatially, the development has to some extent, reduced the openness of the Green Belt.
11. Nevertheless, from those locations where the new outbuilding is visible, it is seen amongst a wider complex of development and often larger buildings. Moreover, and on the basis that the new building is within the same planning unit as the large dwelling on the appeal site, its use is unlikely to result in more than a minor increase in activity levels within the site. Consequently, the development does not substantially harm the openness of the Green Belt. That being the case, it conforms with the exception at paragraph 154. g) of the Framework, and there is no need to consider whether it also complies with any of the other paragraph 154 exceptions.
12. For the reasons given, the scheme is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies. As such, it complies with policy P2 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

13. I have found that the appeal scheme is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. That being the case, there is no need to consider whether very special circumstances would justify the development.
14. If the outbuilding were to be used in such a way that would result in the formation of a new planning unit, then this would be a matter for the Council to investigate.
15. The new outbuilding has a pleasing appearance, and its form and external materials - which include timber cladding and clay roof tiles, sit comfortably with both nearby buildings and areas of woodland. As such, and whether or not the appearance of other parts of Park Barn Farm have deteriorated, the development subject of this appeal has not caused harm to the character or appearance of the area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, and having regard to the development plan as a whole and any material considerations, I conclude that this appeal should be allowed.

V Simpson

INSPECTOR