
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/24/3352911

Juniper House, The Common, Shalford GU4 8DY

- 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 Moulton against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/00934.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension with Juliet balcony.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has submitted amended plans with this appeal. These retain the first floor extension but remove a single storey extension from the proposed development. This reduces the size of development under consideration. Taking into account the main issues, and in the circumstances of this case, the parties would not be prejudiced if I were to consider these documents, and I have taken them into account in this decision. Consequently, the description of development has been amended to that listed on the appeal form as this accurately describes the development for which permission is sought.

Main Issues

3. 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 proposal on the openness of the Green Belt.
 - Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

4. 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 is inappropriate, and thus should be approved only if very special circumstances exist, unless they come within one of

the categories in the closed list of exceptions in the Framework. This is broadly echoed by policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019) (LP).

5. Of relevance to this appeal, paragraph 154c) of the Framework 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.
6. Juniper house has been previously extended and the appellant shows the original house as being a modest two storey dwelling with a hipped, pitched roof with subservient single storey extensions on both side elevations. The Council states that the floor area of the original building was 221sqm.
7. The main house has subsequently been extended and now has a two storey extension with a hipped pitched roof above to the eastern elevation, and an enlarged single storey side addition to the western elevation with an apex roof. Whilst there is dispute between the main parties as to the existing floor area it is, at least, 317sqm.
8. The proposed development would be a further addition to the property. It would be a first floor extension above the existing single storey side addition to the western side with a hipped and pitched apex roof above with 41sqm of additional floorspace. This would be at least an increase in floor area of just over 60% from the original building. It would not increase the footprint compared to the existing building, but it would change the scale of the side addition to a larger, more bulky extension across two storeys.
9. Taken together, the existing and proposed extensions to the original building would be substantial additions to the original dwelling. They would result in a minimum of just over a 60% increase in floor area in addition to the notably enlarged bulk, mass and volume to this dwelling as well as a clear increase in footprint. As such the proposed development would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
10. Therefore, for the reasons described above, the appeal scheme is inappropriate development in the Green Belt both in the terms of the Framework and Policy P2 of the LP, as set out above.

Openness

11. Openness has both spatial and visual dimensions. The proposed development would introduce built form at a first floor level in an area that is currently open and it increases the scale, mass and amount of development in this location. Furthermore, the western elevation is visible from public footpaths in close proximity, and the increased size of the building would be seen above and through the existing boundary treatment. Therefore, the proposed development would be harmful to spatial and visual openness.
12. Consequently, for the reasons above, the proposed development would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. As such, it would be contrary to the Framework in this regard.

Other Considerations

13. The proposed development would provide increased living accommodation for the existing occupiers. Albeit, there is nothing before me to suggest that the existing property is undersized. This would mainly be a private benefit. There is no dispute as to the detailing or materials proposed, however the lack of harm in this regard is a neutral factor.

Green Belt Balance

14. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful. There is also harm to the Green Belt due to the effect on openness. Substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
15. On the other hand, the proposed development would result in positive effects to the occupiers of Juniper House. However, these are mainly private benefits. Consequently, the benefits associated with the proposed development would be limited.
16. Therefore, the other considerations outlined above do not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm. As a result, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. As such, the proposed development would conflict with the Framework and policy P2 of the LP.

Conclusion

17. 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