



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 April 2025

by **Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/24/3354631

The Blanches, Woodlands Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6NW

- 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 & Mrs Sherwood against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2024/700.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension.
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Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/24/3354632

The Cedars, Woodlands Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6NW

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 - The development proposed is first floor extension.
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Decisions

The Blanches (APP/M3645/D/24/3354631)

1. The appeal is dismissed.

The Cedars (APP/M3645/D/24/3354632)

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. Two separate applications were submitted for the proposed first floor extensions to both properties; they are a semi-detached pair of properties which are symmetrical in terms of external design and appearance and the proposed first floor extensions would also be symmetrical across the pair of dwellings. The applications were accompanied by the same plans and it is apparent from the plans, for example the absence of an elevation between the two properties, that the proposed first floor extension is intended to be built across the two properties. This has also been confirmed by the Appellants at the appeal stage. In respect of each appeal, I have considered each on its individual merits. However, to avoid repetition I have dealt with the relevant issues concurrently.
4. The postcodes on the application forms are different to the ones used on the decision notices and with the appeals. I have therefore corrected the postcodes in the header above.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this appeal are:

- Whether the development would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and its effect on openness,
- The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area, and
- If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations. If so, would this amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

6. The Blanches and the Cedars are a semi-detached pair of flat roofed, single storey properties in an open rural setting. They are located on the north-west side of Woodlands Lane which runs within woodland to serve a small number of dwellings at the northern end, surrounded by open fields and woodland. I understand that the properties the subject of these appeals result from the conversion of a chicken shed to form two dwellings, and the relevant permissions, 2015/1902 and 2016/1636 both removed permitted development rights for enlargements to the properties. The site lies within the Green Belt.
7. The proposal for each property is a first floor extension which would be set in slightly from the property edges under a hipped roof with a small central section of flat roof. The front elevation to each property would have a pair of full length vertical roof lights and at the rear, a pair of full length vertical roof lights, two smaller roof lights and a single full length vertical roof light. There would be two roof lights per property in the flat roof section.
8. Paragraph 154 of the Framework sets out that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate except for a limited number of exceptions including the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The term disproportionate is not further defined.
9. The Council has also referred to Policies DP10 and DP13 of its Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014 2019) (TLP Part 2) which broadly follows national policy in confirming the protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development and setting out forms of development which would not be regarded as inappropriate development. This includes under E. the extension or alteration of an existing building, including ancillary buildings within the curtilage, providing it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The term 'disproportionate' is not further defined and the supporting text states that the Council will judge each proposal on its individual merits, taking into account a number of factors, but that as a general rule the Council will use a calculation of external volume as the measure of whether a proposal is mathematically disproportionate.

10. The Appellant has set out the original and therefore the existing volume of each property stands at 480.0 m³ and each proposal would add 144.70 m³ which would be approximately a 30% increase in volume, whereas using the floor space figures the increase would be around 50%. The Council has only referred to volume, in accordance with the guidance set out in the supporting text to Policy DP13 of the TLP Part 2. On its figures, the Council considers that the increase in volume would be marginally higher and in the order of 31- 32%.
11. In addition to the numerical assessment, I have taken into account the proposed changes to the bulk and massing of the building. The existing properties are of simple rectangular form under a flat roof. The addition of a first floor within a hipped roof would significantly increase the bulk and massing of each property. The overall height of each property would be almost doubled and the proposed materials for the roof planes and the number of roof lights proposed would all combine to make each property significantly more bulky and prominent in height and form and overall massing.
12. Taking all of these factors into account and having regard to both Policies DP10 and DP13 of the TLP Part 2 as well as the Framework, it is my view that the proposed development in respect of each property would be a disproportionate addition to the original building and would therefore be inappropriate development.
13. The additional bulk and massing of the proposed first floor addition to each property would also harm the openness of the Green Belt, in both spatial and visual terms, through the introduction of additional built form.

Character and appearance

14. Both properties are set in an attractive rural setting comprising both open fields and woodland. Although the lane serves a small number of properties at its northern end, the two properties the subject of these appeals are set apart with open grounds around and within a verdant rural setting.
15. The properties as existing are modest in their scale and appearance, which in part relates to their single storey form with a flat roof and the external materials, which enable them to be sensitively integrated into their landscaped setting. The proposed addition of a first floor under a hipped roof to each property would materially increase the prominence of each property and the increase in built form would detract from their open and rural landscape setting. The proposed materials and the number of proposed roof lights would further contribute to the over prominence of each dwelling within the verdant rural setting.
16. I therefore conclude that the proposed extensions to each property would materially harm the character and appearance of the local area. This would conflict with Policies CSP18 and CSP21 of the Council's Core Strategy 2008 and Policy DP7 of the TLP Part 2 as well as the Framework and in particular Sections 12 and 15, all of which amongst other matters seek a high quality of design which respects the local context, including the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside.

Other Considerations

17. The Appellants have contended that the Council has normally considered extensions of up to 40% as a rule of thumb as not being disproportionate to the original dwelling, although acknowledging that the percentage is not defined in

guidance. I have no information before me in this regard and each proposal must be considered on its individual merits, which has been the basis of my assessment. I cannot therefore give weight to this contention.

18. The proposals follow on from an earlier refusal of permission for a first floor extension of a very different form. My consideration is based on the merits of the proposals before me.

19. The nearest properties are of a different scale and proportions with pitched roofs. However, the appeal properties are set apart from these other dwellings. It does not, in my view, follow that because the nearby dwellings have pitched roofs, that the appeal properties should share the same roof form. I do not consider that this contention offers weight in support of the proposals.

Conclusion

20. The proposal in respect of each dwelling would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and would harm openness. In accordance with the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. Even taken together, the other considerations put forward provide little support for either scheme. Therefore, they do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and 'very special circumstances' do not exist. Therefore, the proposed extension in respect of each property would not accord with the development plan and there are no other material considerations to outweigh that finding.

21. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that both these appeals should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR