



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 April 2025

by **Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 May 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/25/3360932

Oaklands, Norwood Hill Road, Charlwood, Surrey, RH6 0EB.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant [outline] planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Stephen Brooks against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2024/2144/PLAH.
 - The development proposed is a detached garage
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a detached garage at Oaklands, Norwood Hill Road, Charlwood, Surrey, RH6 0EB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref MO/2024/2144/PLAH, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, drawings: 18-07-2011 RevA, OCB/JY/Kenchester/001/A RevA, 002/A RevA, 003/A RevA, 004/A RevA.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt, and
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. Oaklands has the appearance of a former agricultural building, now converted to a residential dwelling. It is a relatively large, detached structure that sits towards the front of a large irregular shaped plot within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

4. The appellant proposes the construction of a three-bay open fronted garage. It would be sited adjacent to the northern boundary of the site and slightly in front of the main façade of the dwelling and some 15.0 metres away from it. The Council states in its evidence that the garage should be considered as an extension to the dwelling. From what I have seen and read I agree.
5. Policy EN1 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 (LP) states that land which is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt will be protected against inappropriate development, as defined by national policy. It sets out exceptions which largely align with those set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). 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.
6. From the Council's evidence the existing dwelling has a floor area of about 412 square metres and the proposed garage would have a floor area of 49.7 square metres. It calculates therefore that the increase in floor area would be just 12%. In respect of volume, the increase would be some 120 cubic metres. However, no evidence has been submitted as to the volume of the existing dwelling. Nevertheless, in terms of the overall increase in floor area alone the proposed garage would be a relatively modest addition and not therefore disproportionate in size.
7. Insofar as the supporting text of LP Policy EN1 indicates that a broader assessment should also be made of design, bulk and mass of the extension and the effect that would have on the scale of the existing building, the garage would be free standing. It would therefore have no effect on the scale of the existing building.
8. Whilst the supporting text also makes reference to openness, unlike some other exceptions, an assessment is not an explicit requirement of LP Policy EN1(3)(a) or of the similar exception set out within the paragraph 154(c) of the Framework. The effects of the extension on openness would indeed have no bearing on whether or not it was a disproportionate addition. Having otherwise met the relevant exceptions there is no requirement to further assess effects on openness.
9. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would be not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and would therefore comply with Policy EN1 of the LP as set out above.

Character and appearance

10. The proposed garage has been designed as an oak framed structure with a traditional pitched tiled roof and traditional shiplap boarding to the three enclosed sides, that would match the external wall cladding of Oaklands. It would have the appearance of traditional agricultural cart store. Therefore, having regard to the design of Oaklands itself and its rural location it would be a wholly suitable design in this context.
11. Given the proposed design of the garage and its location close to host property, and while considering the built form of the immediate surrounding area the building would harmonise satisfactorily with the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. It would therefore not cause harm to the visual amenities of the area.

12. In addition, the garage would be located where vehicles associated with the dwelling are currently parked. Accordingly, they would be garaged out of site. This would result in a small but nevertheless material visual improvement locally.
13. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conform with LP Policy EN4 which sets out a requirement for new development to be of high-quality design that makes appositve contribution to local character.

Conditions

14. I have, in the interests of both precision and enforceability, considered the conditions suggested by the Council in light of the advice in the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.
15. In the interests of certainty, I shall also impose a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.
16. To ensure a high quality development, I shall impose a condition securing matching materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building.
17. The site lies in a Red Zone for Great Crested Newts, which indicates their possible presence within the area. Though a survey has not been considered necessary by the Council, an informative has been proposed which would draw the appellant's attention to their protected status. As informatives are not included in appeal decisions I have not attached the informative. Nevertheless, through the appeal process this informative has been drawn to the appellant's attention.

Conclusions

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

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR