



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025 by M Long BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 June 2025.

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/24/3354464

20 Burfield Road, Old Windsor, Windsor SL4 2RD

- 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 Mrs Kate Atkinson against the decision of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 24/01529.
 - The development proposed is part side - part rear first floor extension and alterations to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - 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 necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether or not inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. There is no dispute between the main parties that the site is in the Green Belt for planning purposes. Paragraph 154 outlines that development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, save for a number of exceptions. The relevant exception in this case is 'c) 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'.

5. The appeal dwelling has already been previously extended. The Council's Officer Report indicates that the original building had a floor space of approximately 96 square metres (sqm). The proposal, including the previous additions to the property, would result in a total floor space of approximately 164.6 sqm. These figures have not been disputed by the appellant.
6. Even though the relevant development plan policies provided may not give a specific threshold to determine what might constitute a disproportionate addition, the above figures indicate that there would be a cumulative uplift in floor space of around 71.5% over the size of the original building. This would be a substantial cumulative enlargement to the extent that the total additions would be disproportionate and would not meet the exception at Paragraph 154 c).
7. I conclude that the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, it would be contrary to Policy QP5 of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 (2022) (BLP) which confirms that the Green Belt will be protected against inappropriate development as defined by the Framework.

Openness

8. Paragraph 142 of the Framework sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
9. In spatial terms, the proposal would add bulk and volume, reducing openness to the side and rear of the host dwelling. This would be visible from Burfield Road as well as from neighbouring land and windows. Taking these factors into account and given the extension's scale and close association with the main dwelling, the overall effects on openness would be limited. Even so, the proposal would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, thereby conflicting with the aims of including land within the Green Belt when assessed against the Framework.

Character and appearance

10. Within the vicinity of the appeal site, Burfield Road is characterised by a variety of housing designs and layouts. The two-storey, semi-detached appeal dwelling has a conventional suburban design and is set back from the highway by a large frontage. Its external elevations are primarily constructed from bricks and the dwelling has wide windows facing towards the street. To one side of the dwelling is a single-storey projection that abuts the plot boundary.
11. Next to this side boundary is a path that separates the site from the neighbouring building at 28A and 28B Burfield Road. This neighbouring building has a front elevation angled away from that of the appeal dwelling. It also has a more traditional character with pink painted walls, tall windows and a catslide roof slope that faces towards the appeal site. At the bottom of this roof slope is a single storey side projection that sits close to the boundary with the path.
12. Given its position set back from the front elevation, set in from the side boundary and set down from the ridgeline, the proposal would have a subordinate appearance in relation to the host. It would be positioned above the existing single storey projection and well set back from the highway, which would limit its prominence within the street scene.

13. Even though the proposal would be close to the side boundary, the adjacent path offers separation from the neighbouring plot and building at 28A and 28B Burfield Road. Furthermore, due to their differing architectural styles, external finishes and alignment, together with the retained space between the two-storey elements, there would be no terracing effect. Consequently, the proposal would be comfortably accommodated at the site and within the wider street scene.
14. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Wide Design Guide (2020) sets out that a minimum gap of 1 metre between the building and the side boundary should normally be retained. However, it does not state that this must be the case for all schemes. The proposal would accord with general guidance contained within this document that extensions need to respect the main building they relate to in terms of style, form and detailing and that they also need to be subordinate. Given the site circumstances described, a minor breach of the minimum gap guidance would not be harmful in character and appearance terms in this particular instance.
15. I conclude that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. Insofar as it relates to character and appearance considerations, it would accord with Policy QP3 of the BLP which requires high quality design.

Other considerations

16. I accept that the proposal would provide additional accommodation that has the potential to meet the needs of the appellant and their family, including an additional bedroom. I also acknowledge the personal connections that the appellant has to the house and the locality, as well as its proximity to extended family members and friends. Nevertheless, these are private benefits to a single family, and I attribute limited weight to them.
17. Even if the size and design of the extension justifies its financial cost, this does not provide a reason to allow development which conflicts with the development plan and the Framework.
18. I have been made aware of developments in the wider area which share some similarities to the appeal scheme. However, the full details of these schemes are not before me and so I cannot be certain of the context in which they may have received planning permission, including their individual Green Belt considerations.

Other Matter

19. The appellant suggests that there was a lack of communication from the Council during the application stage. Whether or not that be the case, this issue is not a matter for my assessment which must be focussed on the planning merits of the appeal proposal.

Green Belt Balance and Recommendation

20. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances. As part of the assessment, I have also found that the proposal would result in some limited harm to openness.

21. Paragraph 153 of the Framework specifies that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations. This is a high hurdle for a development proposal to overcome.
22. The lack of harm identified to the character and appearance of the area is of neutral consequence. The other considerations put forward only carry limited weight and so do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. As such, the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposed development do not exist.
23. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and the Framework. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Long

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

24. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR