



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025

by V Goldberg BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/24/3353738

Pilgrims Corner, Gravelly Hill, Caterham, Surrey CR3 6ES

- 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 Adel Perseh against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2024/174.
 - The development proposed is the resubmission of previously refused application for a 4 bedroom detached residential property within 12 months of the original refusal.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to any relevant development plan policies and the Framework;
 - the effect of the proposal on the Surrey Hills National Landscape,
 - 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

Whether inappropriate development

3. The site is located within the Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the Framework sets out that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless exceptions apply. One of these exceptions is the limited infilling of previously developed land which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
4. Policy DP10 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies 2014 (Local Plan) aligns with the Framework and details that inappropriate development will normally be refused. Additionally, Policy DP13 of the Local Plan details exceptions to inappropriate development. Criterion (G) refers to the limited infilling of previously developed sites in the Green Belt (outside the Defined Villages), where

the proposal would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

5. The appeal site is part of the residential curtilage associated with the detached dwelling known as Pilgrims Corner. It is therefore previously developed land. The existing development on site is limited to Pilgrims Corner and a detached double garage that serves the property. The proposed dwelling would be positioned adjacent to the garage on an undeveloped section of the site. Despite the proposal having a reduced floor area from a previously refused application and an increased spatial separation from the bridleway, it would be a large property that would disperse the built form on site and as a result negatively effect the openness of the Green Belt.
6. Openness is identified in the Framework as one of the Green Belt's essential characteristics. It has both spatial and visual aspects. The spatial impact of the proposal is significant, as it would substantially increase the built form on site. With reference to the visual impact, the proposal would be visible from Gravelly Hill and would extend the built form along the road. This would erode the undeveloped gap between the garage and adjoining woodland, which provides an open spacious feeling and therefore adversely impact the visual openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development would therefore have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on site and would conflict with the purpose of the Green Belt to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The proposal would therefore adversely impact the openness of the Green Belt, resulting in significant harm to it.
7. For the reasons above, the proposal does not fall within the exceptions to inappropriate development listed in Policy DP13 of the Local Plan or the Framework. It would therefore comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As a result, the proposal would be contrary to Policy DP10 of the Local Plan.

Surrey Hills National Landscape

8. The appeal site is located within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (SHNL). The amended duty on relevant authorities in respect of their interactions with statutory purposes of National Landscapes, requires relevant authorities in exercising or performing any functions in relation to National Landscapes, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.
9. Gravelly Hill has a rural verdant appearance. It is characterised by detached dwellings in spacious plots fronting the road. The gaps between properties provide scenic views of the undulating landscape to the rear.
10. The proposal would be visible from Gravelly Hill and would infill the gap between the garage and adjoining woodland and restrict views of the landscape to the rear. In addition, the erection of a large, detached dwelling in a previously undeveloped section of the site would substantially increase built form on site, erode the spacious nature of the plot and therefore fail to conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the SHNL.
11. The proposal would have a hip end pitched roof to match the garage and existing dwelling and there would be separation between it and the bridleway. However, this would not negate the harm arising from the substantial increase in built form on site that would infill the gap between the dwelling and woodland.

12. For the reasons above, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the SHNL. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CSP20 of the Local Plan that requires development to conserve and enhance the special landscape character of the SHNL.

Other Matters

13. The Council have not identified harm in respect of the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of future occupiers, neighbouring amenity nor highways. However, the absence of harm is a neutral factor and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.
14. Reference is made to the proposal being in a location where development has previously been approved. However, the recent planning history detailed in the officer's report, does not indicate that planning permission has been granted for development other than extensions to the main dwelling.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. The proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt resulting in a loss of openness. The Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It would also be harmful to the SHNL which I give great weight. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm are clearly outweighed by other considerations. The limited benefits that would accrue from the provision of an additional dwelling and renewable energy are not considerations that clearly outweigh the harm arising from the harm to the Green Belt and SHNL. The very special circumstances required to justify the proposal do not, therefore, exist.
16. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Consequently, paragraph 11 d) of the Framework is engaged. However, paragraph 11 d) i) states that there are circumstances where the application of policies in the Framework to protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the proposal. Footnote 7 identifies Green Belt and National Landscapes as such areas and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

Conclusion

17. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is dismissed.

V Goldberg

INSPECTOR