



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2025

by **D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/25/3360808

Norwood Farm House, Elvedon Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1BS

- 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 Olivia and George Looker against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/2537.
 - The development proposed is demolition of part of detached garage, and construction of new single storey rear orangery.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for demolition of part of detached garage, and construction of new single storey rear orangery at Norwood Farm House, Elvedon Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1BS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2024/2537, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan Policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, 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 required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. Paragraph 143 of the Framework sets out the purposes of the Green Belt which are; to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4. Paragraph 154 of the Framework sets out the categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate in the Green Belt, subject to certain conditions. New buildings within the Green Belt are inappropriate unless, amongst other things, they relate to 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 Framework does not provide a definition of 'disproportionate additions' and therefore an assessment of whether a proposal would amount to disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building is a matter of planning judgement.
6. Policy DM18 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan April 2015 (LP) states that with regard to extensions and alterations to a building, support will be given to proposals do not result in an increase beyond 25% in volume and 25% in footprint over and above the size of the original building.
7. There is no dispute between the parties that while there would be less than a 25% increase in volume, the increase in footprint would be over 25% and would therefore conflict with Policy DM18 of the LP. I therefore find that the proposed development would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Therefore, the exemption at Paragraph 154 (c) of the Framework is not met.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As far as relevant, it would be contrary to Policy DM18 of the LP. I am required to attach substantial weight to this harm.

Openness

9. A fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraph 142 of the Framework, is to keep land permanently open. I acknowledge that the appeal site is generally not visible from any public viewpoints, and the development in particular is contained within an internal corner of the building which means there would be no visual impact on openness.
10. However, the construction of a single storey orangery on the site would result in built development where there is presently none, which would have a harmful effect on spatial openness.
11. However, part of the appeal scheme proposes the demolition of a section of a detached garage. The section of garage that is proposed to be demolished is larger in footprint and volume than the proposed orangery. While there would be very little impact on improving visual openness due to the site's location, there would be an improvement in spatial openness.
12. Consequently, the development would lead to a minor improvement in visual openness and moderate improvement to spatial openness of the Green Belt.

Other considerations

13. The appeal building is historic and as a result the rooms are small, and the layout may be unsuitable for modern living. However, the change in layout to accommodate a kitchen and informal dining area is a private benefit to the occupiers which would not amount to a very special circumstance.

14. The proposed development would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt which carries substantial weight against the proposed development. However, the proposal would improve openness, both visually to a limited degree and spatially to a moderate degree. I note the Council's suggestion that the section of garage has no consent, however, there is no evidence that the Council intend to act over this matter and in any case, the reduction in built form would still improve Green Belt openness.
15. In light of the improvement to openness there would be no conflict with the fundamental aims of the Green Belt outlined in Paragraph 142 which attracts great weight in favour of the proposal that would outweigh the harm identified.

Conditions

16. Condition 1 is the standard condition which relates to the commencement of development and condition 2 specifies the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt.
17. Condition 3 is necessary to ensure that the section of the garage is demolished before commencement or the remainder of the proposed works in order to improve openness within the Green Belt. Conditions 4 and 5 require that the materials use match those used on the existing building and details of the proposed windows are approved in order to protect the character and appearance of the area.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

18. In summary, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the terms set out by the Framework. The Framework requires that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
19. However, the proposed development would improve openness both spatially and visually. As a result, there would not conflict with the fundamental aims of the Green Belt which attracts great weight in favour of the proposed development.
20. For the reasons set out above the harm to the Green Belt would be clearly outweighed by the other considerations and, therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify a grant of planning permission have been demonstrated. Consequently, the appeal should be allowed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 drawing nos:

Site Location 2372-EX-1A
OS Plan, 1912 2372-EX-5
Proposed Site plan 2372-SK-22
Ground Floor 2372-SK-20
Roof Plan 2372-SK-21
Rear Elevation 2372-EX-7
Side Elevation 2372-EX-6
Proposed Garages Plans and Elevations 2372-SK-23
3. No development of the single storey rear orangery hereby approved shall commence until the section of the garage shown on the Proposed Site Plan 2372-SK-22 has been demolished down to slab level in its entirety and the debris removed from the site for disposal elsewhere.
4. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension shall match as nearly as is practically possible those of the existing building to which it is attached, in colour, type, finish and profile. The existing external walls that are to be enclosed within the extension are to be retained as brickwork and not covered or painted.
5. No development shall take place above ground level until detailed drawings at a scale of 1:10 (elevations) and 1:5 (sections) of the proposed windows within the new extension are submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.