



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2025

by **P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 AUGUST 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/25/3360145

The Lime House, Lowicks Road, Rushmoor, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2EY

- 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 and Mrs M Williams against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2024/01538.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of residential annexe to form a self contained dwelling, including associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of residential annexe to form a self-contained dwelling, including associated landscaping at The Lime House, Lowicks Road, Rushmoor, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2EY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WA/2024/01538, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan 007; Proposed elevations 001; Proposed Floor /Roof Plans 003; Proposed Site Plan 005.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be the materials specified on plan Proposed elevations 001.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. However, I have removed any wording which does not relate to acts of development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with reference to the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (NL) and within an Area of Greater Landscape Value. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within NLs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Additionally, Section 85

of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) places a duty upon me to seek to further the statutory purpose of the NLs, which is to protect and enhance their natural beauty.

5. The special qualities of the NL include a diverse landscape characterised by areas of woodland, farmland and picturesque villages. Lowicks Road is bordered by trees and hedgerows which provides it with a semi-rural and verdant appearance. It is generally characterised by detached dwellings with varied setbacks from the road set within plots of different sizes and shapes, interspersed with paddocks and woodland in the wider setting. There is no prevailing style or appearance to the nearby dwellings, and the gaps between properties are also varied.
6. The Lime House is a two-storey dwelling with roof accommodation located within a substantial plot. The site further comprises ancillary outbuildings, a tennis court and swimming pool. The outbuilding subject to this appeal has first floor accommodation. It is situated at some distance from its host and is close to the common boundary with Burdens. The verdant landscape surrounding the site is reflective of the prevailing characteristics of the NL.
7. The scheme seeks to change the use of the existing outbuilding to a self-contained dwelling. To do so, the proposal comprises minor alterations to the outbuilding, as well as the provision of a new access drive, parking spaces and landscaping to sub-divide the existing garden. The existing access point onto the highway would be retained and would serve both The Lime House and the new property.
8. The existing building was granted permission as ancillary accommodation to the host property for a temporary period. While this has now expired, the relationship between the building and the neighbouring properties, including Burdens and the host, has already been established. The external alterations necessary to create the new plot would not be extensive and would be appropriate in relation to the existing built form. Consequently, the relationship between the proposal and these neighbouring dwellings would be acceptable.
9. The proposed sub-division of the donor property would result in two plots of a reasonable size that would allow them to sit comfortably within the surrounding context. In addition, the size of the proposed plot would enable it to successfully accommodate the new house whilst allowing set back from the road and sufficient garden space to the front and a tennis court, so the plot would not appear contrived. The new dwelling would have its frontage facing onto the road and would share the existing access with the donor property. Therefore, the proposed development would respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not harm the natural beauty of the Surrey Hills NL.
10. For the reasons above, the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area, with reference to the Surrey Hills NL. The proposal would accord with Policies TD1 and RE3 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites 2018 (LPP1) and with Policies DM4 and DM15 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2023. Amongst other things, these policies support development of a high-quality design that responds to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is located, protects and enhances

the character and qualities of the Surrey Hills NL, and recognises the natural beauty of the countryside.

11. The Council's reason for refusal refers to LPP1 Policy RE1. However, this policy relates to the countryside beyond the Green Belt. Given that the appeal site lies within the Green Belt, this policy would have limited relevance in the context of this appeal.

Other Matters

12. The proposed external alterations to the building would be modest, so the external appearance of the building would not significantly change. While the concerns regarding the state and condition of the woodwork and timber doors on the building's southern elevation are noted, the relationship between the proposal and Burdens in terms of outlook would not be dissimilar to the existing situation. The proposal would include a new window close to the boundary with Burdens, however it would be ground floor and would not face directly towards this neighbouring property. Further, there is limited evidence before me to suggest that the existing boundary fence between both properties would be removed. As such, the proposal would protect the privacy of these neighbours.
13. The proposed dwelling would be small, so the number of occupants would likely be limited and therefore any increase in activity would not be significant. As such, it is unlikely that the proposal would feel intrusive or give rise to undue levels of noise and disturbance that would be incompatible with the semi-rural surroundings.
14. Paragraph 155h) of the Framework sets out that other forms of development may not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. One such exception, at paragraph 155h) iv) is the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. This appears to be the case with the appeal building. The proposal would preserve openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Therefore, in the absence of compelling evidence to demonstrate otherwise, the scheme would accord with the Framework in this regard.
15. Each proposal must be determined on its individual merits, so a generalised concern about precedent does not justify withholding permission in this case. Reference is made within the Planning Statement (PS) that the proposal would aid in the provision of sustainable tourism. However, this is not developed any further within the PS and there is no compelling evidence before me to suggest that this would be the case.
16. The site lies within the 2km buffer zone of the Wealden Heaths Phase I Special Conservation Zone (SAC), 1km buffer zone of the Wealden Heaths Phase I Special Protection Area (SPA) and 5km buffer zone of Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA. Due to the provision of an additional dwelling, the proposal would result in an increase in people living permanently on site and, consequently, an increase in people accessing the SAC/SPAs. However, I note that LPP1 Policy NE1 requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment within 400m of the boundary of the SPA and the appeal site is located beyond this. Furthermore, the Council has stated that due to the availability of alternative recreational opportunities in the area, which would divert residents from use of the SAC/SPAs, the proposal would not have a likely significant effect on their integrity. Given such, an appropriate assessment is not required.

Conditions

17. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council having regard to the tests in the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance. Where necessary I have made changes to the wording of the conditions in the interests of clarity and effectiveness.
18. In addition to the standard time limit condition, in the interests of certainty it is appropriate that there is a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. To ensure a satisfactory appearance and to minimise the visual impact of the scheme, a condition is required regarding external materials.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR