



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/25/3367685

Wren Cottage The Street, West Clandon, Guildford GU4 7TD

- 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 Mike Robson against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/P/00309.
 - The development proposed is a carport in the front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: -
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development 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 host property and the surrounding area; and
 - on the basis that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, 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 development.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development

3. Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019) (LPSS) seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and is broadly consistent with the Framework. The Framework states in paragraph 154 that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a number of listed exceptions applies.
4. The exceptions include 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. In the Council's officer report, this is referred to as exception (d); however, as set out in the Framework, it is exception (c).

5. I agree with the Council and following caselaw that whilst detached, the proposed carport would be located in close proximity to be a domestic adjunct to the main dwelling, to be considered under exception (c).
6. Neither the Framework nor the Local Plan define 'disproportionate additions'; it is therefore a matter of judgement. The Council advises that the bungalow built in 1957 originally had a floor area of 85.36 sqm, and due to existing extensions along with the proposed carport, there would be a 161% increase. The appellant does not dispute these figures, and whilst the carport would be a modest structure, it would add to the scale and form of the property. Cumulatively, the additions can only be considered disproportionate in relation to the size of the original dwelling. Therefore, the proposal does not accord with exception 154 (c).
7. Consideration was also given to infilling under exception 154 (e). The supporting text to Policy P2 and the Council's Green Belt SPD set out further guidance. Located in the front of the property and with a reasonably sized front garden extending to the road, the carport would not be sited in an existing gap between buildings. As such, I agree with the Council that it would not constitute infilling.
8. The proposed development would therefore not fall within exception (c) or (e) and would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In accordance with the Framework, such development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness

9. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness in terms of the Green Belt has both spatial and visual aspects.
10. As an open structure adjacent to the property and in the context of the setting as part of a residential road of large, detached properties, the impact on the wider appearance of the Green Belt would be negligible.

Character and Appearance

11. The appeal property is set back from the road and, like the other properties along The Street, it has a gated entrance and hedging at the front boundary. It is not as tall as the neighbouring boundaries, although many of the other properties are two-storey. Whilst the proposed development would be visible in part along the drive and over the hedging, I do not find it would be a prominent or visually intrusive addition. The carport would be an open structure, and the pitched roof would have a limited height, significantly below the ridge line of the bungalow.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to other similar carports in a forward position along The Street, which I observed along with a number of other structures. The positioning does not follow the guidance in the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD for garages to be located on the side or rear. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would not cause a disproportionate loss of the front garden, and similar features are present in the locality.
13. Overall, I find that the scale and form of the development would be appropriate for the setting, and the prevailing verdant and spacious character of the area would be maintained.

14. Thus, the proposal would accord with policy D1 of the LPSS and policies D4 and H4 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (LPDMP), which promote high-quality design and respect for local distinctiveness. There would also be compliance with the West Clandon Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2034, which, amongst other things, seeks to retain front gardens and to preserve the leafy, rural character of the area.

Other Considerations

15. The appellant advises that the proposal would provide the occupants with covered vehicular parking in close proximity to the front door, which is suited to their limited mobility and supports their independence to access local services. I recognise that the carport would provide convenience and protection, particularly during adverse weather. However, this is primarily a private benefit, and I have not been provided with any evidence of specific disability requirements. Accordingly, it is a matter to which I can only give limited weight.
16. The appellant has referred me to an appeal decision which relates to a carport at Owl Cottage, further along The Street. From my observations, that carport is in a similar position to the appeal proposal. However, the full background to that development is not before me, and the appeal decision refers to it being a new dwelling, and there is also a reference to a permitted carport. Whether or not other carports are infilling is not a matter before me, and I am required to determine this appeal on its own merits.
17. The development would not have any adverse impacts on the amenities of the neighbouring properties, nor would it impact the living conditions of the occupiers in relation to daylight or sunlight. These are, however, neutral matters as compliance with design and amenity policy is to be expected.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

18. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. I have not found harm to openness or the character and appearance of the area. Nonetheless, in accordance with the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
19. Even taken together, the other considerations put forward provide little support for the scheme. Therefore, they do not outweigh the definitional harm to the Green Belt, and very special circumstances do not exist. The proposed carport would not accord with policy P2 of the LPSS, and there are no other material considerations to outweigh that finding.
20. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR