



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by **J Heppell BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/25/3362373

Rodgate, Rodgate Lane, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2EW

- 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 R Goold against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2024/02417.
 - The development proposed is erection of a detached garage following the demolition of the existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the development 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; and
 - whether the 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 appeal site comprises a detached dwelling situated within a small cluster of buildings in open countryside. The proposal is to demolish a single garage attached to the neighbouring property, the Coach House, and erect a detached double garage and stores beside the main dwelling. The site is in the Green Belt.
4. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, whose essential characteristics are their openness and their permanence. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Paragraph 154 of the Framework guides that development is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions listed in that paragraph applies.
5. Policy RE2 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites February 2018 (LPP1) advises that new development in the Green Belt will

be considered inappropriate and will not be permitted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Policy DM14 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies March 2023 (LPP2) guides that replacement buildings in the Green Belt should not be materially larger than the existing building, which it defines as having a floorspace 10% or more larger than the building it replaces. Policy KP1 of the Chiddingfold Neighbourhood Plan (2013 – 2032) May 2021 (CNP) contains the same provisions as Policy DM14 of the LPP2.

6. Both parties have referred me to paragraph 154(d) of the Framework, which relates to the replacement of a building provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. The proposed building would be in the same use as the existing garage, but the appellant advises that its floorspace would be 64% greater than the existing garage. As such, it would be materially larger than the existing garage, by reference to both Policy DM14 of the LPP2 and Policy KP1 of the CNP. The proposal is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 154 of the Framework.

Openness

7. A fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraph 142 of the Framework, is to keep land permanently open. As well as being materially larger than the existing garage, the proposed building would be prominently positioned next to and slightly in front of the main dwelling, and as a consequence it would extend built form beyond the existing relatively well contained cluster of buildings, in contrast with the existing garage which is tucked away next to the Coach House and has a limited impact on openness. Consequently, the proposal would result in a moderate loss of Green Belt openness.

Other considerations

8. The appellants argue that it is reasonable for householders in rural areas to have garages and covered storage, and that the existing garage is not of sufficient size and quality given that the local parking standard for a house of this size is 2.5 spaces. The Council has pointed out that the appellant's existing single garage exceeds the Council's minimum dimensions, thus ensuring that the appellants have covered parking for one car. Furthermore, the existing garage includes storage areas which, whilst currently open, have the potential to be enclosed. An additional single garage would therefore suffice in terms of meeting the appellants' reasonable needs.
9. Acknowledging that the appellants might have a preference for their garaging and storage to be in one place, it has not been explained why the building needs to be in the location proposed, and whether other potentially less prominent locations have been considered.
10. The proposed building would be of an appropriate design, utilising the Surrey vernacular, and would not be harmful to the Surrey Hills National Landscape within which it is situated. The garage would be subordinate in scale to the main house. However, these are neutral factors in relation to openness.
11. The existing garage would be removed, as a result of which the appellant considers that harm to the Green Belt would be very low. However, the existing

garage is smaller than the proposed building and located in a more secluded position where it has a limited impact on Green Belt openness. The proposed building by contrast would be larger and more prominently positioned. I therefore accord limited weight to the removal of the existing garage.

12. The appellants have pointed to three previous planning permissions on the appeal site, all now expired, for two outbuildings¹, one of which would have been in a similar location to the building currently proposed, and a second one of similar size located further from the main house. As I cannot be certain of the development plan policies then in force in relation to replacement buildings, I have accorded these expired permissions limited weight.
13. The appellants consider that the potential fallback position of utilising permitted development rights to erect a detached single garage carries the potential risk of a garage being built with no control over design and materials. In this scenario, the appellants argue that the current proposal is preferable as it would allow such matters to be controlled. However, as I have not been provided with conclusive evidence that such a fallback position exists, despite the appellants indicating that an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness had been submitted to the Council, I accord this matter limited weight.
14. The appellants have referred me to three planning permissions granted for detached garages in the Green Belt, in which the Council concluded that very special circumstances existed to justify garages materially larger than the development plan ordinarily allowed. In one of these examples – Fairhurst, Roke Lane, Witley GU8 5NZ² – the replacement garage had 47% greater floorspace, and was located in the same position as the existing garage; whilst in another example – Bisney Cottage, Stroud Common, Shamley Green GU5 0TB³ – the replacement garage had 33% greater floorspace, and was located closer to the house, thereby reducing the spread of built development across the site. These examples can thus be distinguished from the current appeal owing to their smaller size and less prominent location, and consequently carry limited weight.
15. The third example – The Great Barn, Smithbrook, Horsham Road, Cranleigh GU6 8LH⁴ – involved a new detached double garage, where the Council considered that the expectation for covered parking, and the fallback position of a single garage using permitted development rights, provided very special circumstances. Whilst there are similarities between this example and the current appeal, I have not been provided with plans of that scheme, and so I cannot assess the extent to which it impacted on openness. I also note that the fallback position in that case was not in dispute. Accordingly, I attach moderate weight to this decision.

Green Belt Balance

16. I have found that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, a matter to which the Framework requires me to attach substantial weight. It would result in a moderate loss of Green Belt openness. The limited benefits that would accrue from the provision of a detached garage is not a consideration that clearly outweighs the harm arising from the inappropriateness. The very special circumstances required to justify the proposal do not, therefore, exist.

¹ LPA references WA/2002/1698, WA/2007/1315 and WA/2010/0978

² LPA reference WA/2020/1953

³ LPA reference WA/2020/1327

⁴ LPA reference WA/2023/00777

17. The proposal would conflict with Policy RE2 of the LPP1, Policy DM14 of the LPP2 and Policy KP1 of the CNP, which seek to protect the openness of the Green Belt by requiring replacement buildings not to be materially larger than the building which they replace. The proposal would also conflict with the objective of the Framework of protecting Green Belt openness.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

J Heppell

INSPECTOR