



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2025

by J D Clark BA (Hons) DpTRP MCD DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/25/3371384

Romany, Plough Lane, Christleton, Chester, Cheshire West and Chester CH3 7PT

- 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 Bolshaw against the decision of Cheshire West & Chester Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00916/FUL.
 - The development proposed is resubmission of previously approved garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The decision notice and the appeal form describe the proposal as the erection of detached garage (amendment to previously approved permission 24/02986/FUL). A planning application with this reference number was approved in January 2025 which I will return to. To clarify, the proposal is for a detached garage although as well as providing space to garage two cars, includes a store on the ground floor and an internal staircase to an upper floor home office/art studio. I have therefore based my assessment on the details shown on the submitted plans but shall refer to it simply as a proposed garage for ease of reference.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are: -
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies and its effect on openness;
 - the effect of the proposed garage on the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area; and
 - whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Green Belt

4. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey house and its gardens set behind hedges and gates on the northern side of Plough Lane. The area is rural in

character with open land interspersed with mostly residential properties along both sides of the road.

5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) explains that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It makes it clear that development is considered inappropriate unless it satisfies one of the exceptions cited in paragraphs 154 or 155. Paragraph 154, sub-section c) allows 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. Local Plan¹ STRAT 9 refers to development in the Green Belt and the countryside. It does not refer to the exception cited in paragraph 154 (c) but its explanatory text reflects the Framework's aims in relation to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
6. Romany has single storey side and rear extensions and the Council state that these multiple extensions increase the size of the original dwelling by 240%. The explanatory text to Local Plan² Policy DM 21 indicates extensions/outbuildings should not increase the size of the original dwelling by more than 30%. This is repeated in the Council's SPD³ with specific reference to outbuildings in the Green Belt within 5 metres of the main dwellinghouse. It is agreed by the parties that the 30% threshold would be exceeded.
7. Whilst a detailed breakdown of the size of the original dwelling and its extensions has not been submitted and the 30% threshold is a guideline only, the house has already been substantially increased in size. Regardless of this, the proposed garage alone would be a large addition to the house. Added to previous extensions, its location, scale, massing and height would result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling.
8. I therefore find that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant development plan policies. As the proposal would be inappropriate, under paragraph 154 (c) of the Framework, there is no need for me to assess openness.

Character and Appearance

9. The existing house has a hipped roof and its extensions to the side include both a flat roofed element and a gable roof. The rear extension has a flat roof. The house and its extensions comprise a mix of brickwork and render and varying roof designs. There is a lack of cohesion arising from the previous additions. The proposed garage would add yet another component to this mix, whilst it would reflect the gable design of the existing side extension, there is no consistency in roof pitch. The proposed garage would be of a scale, proportion and design that failed to reflect the character of the original house. Its bulk and massing would also be inconsistent with the character or form of the existing house.
10. Whilst it would be set back from the front of the house it would extend beyond the rear elevation and be close to the side and rear boundaries of the appeal site. Its

¹ Cheshire West & Chester Council Local Plan (Part One): Strategic Policies, adopted 29 January 2015.

² Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies, adopted 18 July 2019.

³ Cheshire West & Chester Council Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document: House Extensions and Domestic Outbuildings January 2021 (SPD).

location and size, in terms of its footprint, scale, massing and height, would be a significant addition to the existing house as explained above.

11. I therefore find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area. This would conflict with Policy ENV 6 of the Local Plan (Part One) and Policies DM 3 and DM 21 of Local Plan (Part Two) which, amongst other things, require development to achieve a high standard of design, respect local character and achieve a sense of place.

Other Considerations

12. As referred to above, a previous planning application was approved for a detached garage. This is extant and from the information submitted this would have the same footprint as the garage subject to this appeal. However, the appeal proposal would increase the height of the roof at both eaves and ridge level.
13. The approved garage would be substantial in size and as referred to above, would result in extensions far in excess of the 30% guideline. Notwithstanding the mathematical calculations as referred to above, which I note are based on floorspace, visually the existing extensions as built, substantially enlarge the dwelling. The Council state that the approved garage was the result of a negotiated reduction in size to tie in what could potentially be built as permitted development under Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). I consider that the approved garage already goes beyond what could reasonably be considered acceptable in Green Belt terms.
14. Thus, whilst the difference between that approved and that proposed may be modest and no increase in floorspace is proposed, the proposed garage would be taller and given its overall size, bulk and massing, it cannot be considered anything other than a disproportionate addition. Therefore, notwithstanding the fall-back position, allowing a larger garage would clearly conflict with the objectives of Green Belt policy as set out in the Framework and the development plan. Whilst I accept the concept of the fall-back position, I cannot afford this more than limited weight given the totality of harm I have identified.

Planning Balance

15. The Framework makes it clear that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm, by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other circumstances.
16. The fall-back position is a material consideration but, in this case, carries limited weight. Furthermore, the harm caused would be sufficiently worse than the approved scheme and therefore, the very special circumstances required to overcome the harm caused by inappropriateness do not exist.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the very special circumstances required to clearly outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness, and any other harm, in this case character and appearance, do not exist. The scheme would conflict with the Framework, Local

Plan (Part One) Policies STRAT 9, ENV 6, Local Plan (Part Two) Policies DM 3 and DM 21 and the Council's SPD.

Conclusion

18. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J D Clark

INSPECTOR