



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/D/25/3365383

The Lodge, Church Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey GU8 5PW

- 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 Samantha Brett against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2024/02383.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey extension including open canopy porch and alterations to elevations with associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single storey extension including open canopy porch and alterations to elevations with associated works at The Lodge, Church Lane, Witley, Godalming, GU8 5PW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref WA/2024/02383, subject to the following 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 the Location Plan and drawing nos B249997-3000 Rev A, B249997-1100 Rev A, B249997-3100 Rev A.
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Procedural Matters

2. In the interest of accuracy, the description of development in the banner heading above is based on the decision notice and the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and development plan policy.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, known as The Lodge, is a two-storey dwelling located within the Green Belt. It occupies a generous plot containing a detached garage and is bounded by close-boarded fencing and mature vegetation which provides substantial visual screening along the north-western boundary. The property is accessed via a private driveway shared with a neighbouring dwelling. Although

outside the defined settlement boundary, the site forms part of a loose but continuous group of residential plots along Church Lane and is well related to the built edge of Witley.

5. The surrounding area is characterised by detached dwellings of varying scale and design, set within generous plots. The presence of domestic curtilages, garages and garden structures contributes to a semi-rural, yet clearly settled pattern of development. The site therefore reads as part of the village's built-up edge rather than open countryside.
6. The proposal seeks a single-storey orangery extension to the side of the dwelling and an open canopy structure above the main entrance. The orangery would be of modest height, with a combination of pitched and flat roof forms incorporating a central glazed lantern. The porch canopy would project a short distance from the front façade, supported by slender columns and open to each side.
7. Exception (c) of Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. There is no definition of "disproportionate" in national policy and there is no set numerical guidance on measuring proportionality. Instead, the Framework refers to 'size'. This can, quite reasonably, refer to volume, height, external dimensions, footprint, floorspace or visual perception. The assessment is therefore a matter of planning judgment, based on the overall scale, bulk, massing and visual appearance of the extension relative to the original building.
8. Policy RE2 of Part 1 of the Waverley Local Plan (2018)¹ follows this national approach. Policy DM14 of Part 2 of the Local Plan (2023)² advises that, outside settlement boundaries, extensions increasing floorspace by 40% or more over that of the original building will normally be considered disproportionate. However, that policy also recognises that this is a guide rather than a fixed limit and that each case must be judged on its individual merits, particularly where a site is physically or visually well related to a settlement.
9. The Council considers the cumulative increase in floorspace of 68.3% over that of the original building to be disproportionate. However, the appeal site is visually contained within the built edge of Witley and is thus reasonably well related to the settlement. The proposed extensions would be single-storey, of limited depth and subservient to the existing building. The orangery would have a low profile and glazed form, reducing its perceived bulk, while the open canopy porch would introduce negligible additional volume. The proposals would not dramatically increase the visual massing of the dwelling.
10. The Council argues that the ridge height of the proposed orangery would exceed the internal ceiling height of the ground floor and would thereby result in disproportionate bulk. However, it would still be read as single-storey and would sit comfortably below the eaves and ridge of the host building. The glazed lantern would be a lightweight architectural feature which adds visual interest without materially increasing the perceived mass or bulk of the dwelling. Consequently, the increase in height above the existing ground floor ceiling level would not give rise to an unduly dominant or bulky addition.

¹ Waverley Borough Council, Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites, adopted February 2018.

² Waverley Borough Council, Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, adopted March 2023.

11. Whilst parts of the proposed orangery may be seen above the rear fence line from the adjacent public footpath, any such views would be limited and seen in the context of the existing dwelling and garden enclosure. The extension would remain of modest single-storey proportions and would not encroach into open countryside. The use of matching materials, the restrained roof form and the combination of solid and glazed elements would further reduce its perceived scale. As such, it would appear as a subservient and well-integrated addition.
12. The resultant dwelling would remain modest in overall scale. Although the numerical increase in floorspace would exceed 40%, the extensions would not appear unduly bulky or dominant, and would represent proportionate, well-designed additions to the existing building.
13. Accordingly, the proposal would not constitute disproportionate extensions and would accord with exception (c) of paragraph 154 of the Framework. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would accord with Policies RE2 and DM14 of the Waverley Local Plan and with the Framework insofar as they seek to ensure that proposals for extensions in the Green Belt are appropriately scaled.
14. Impact on openness is implicitly taken into account in the exceptions outlined in paragraph 154 unless there is a specific requirement to consider the actual effect on openness. In exception (c), the effect of the development on openness is not expressly stated as a determinative factor in gauging inappropriateness. Consequently, as I have found the proposal would not be inappropriate development, there is no requirement to assess the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Other Matters

15. The site lies within the Witley Conservation Area (CA). The southern tip of the CA is characterised by large late 19th or early 20th century properties set within substantial grounds, obscured from the main street scene by trees and careful landscaping. The southern route out of Witley is a sunken lane that hides views of the properties that are alongside it and creates a transition from Witley into the rural surroundings. The appeal site makes a limited contribution to the verdant appearance and rural, transitional character of this part of the CA.
16. The Council's Heritage Officer raised no objection to the proposal, noting that the dwelling is screened from public vantage points. Given the modest form and sympathetic design, the proposal would preserve the setting and character of the Witley Conservation Area.
17. The appeal site is also within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (SHNL) and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The Framework requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in these areas, which is the statutory purpose of such landscapes. I am mindful of my duties to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes. The Surrey Hills Management Plan 2020-2025 outlines the special qualities of the SHNL which has been designated in part because of the natural beauty of the landscape consisting of a mosaic of hills and valleys, traditional mixed farming, a patchwork of chalk grassland and heathland, sunken lanes, picturesque villages and market towns.

18. The modest and subservient scale of the proposed extensions would harmonise well with the rural character of the appeal dwelling and surrounding context. Furthermore, due to the existing screening and relative visual enclosure of the site, the proposed extensions would not feature prominently in the surrounding landscape. The proposal would thus conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the SHNL and AGLV.

Conditions

19. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty I have imposed the standard commencement condition and a condition requiring compliance with the submitted plans. To protect the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and surrounding area, I have imposed a condition requiring the external materials of the extension match those used in the existing dwelling.

Conclusion

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

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR