
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025 by Elizabeth Davies BSc (Hons) MIEMA, CEnv

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/25/3367028

Woodhead Cottage Binton Lane, Seale, Farnham, Surrey GU10 1LG

- 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 Chandler against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/00283.
 - The development proposed is described as “demolition of the existing garage, construction of a first floor extension and two storey side and rear extension to the house (revised scheme).”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt; b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt; and c) if the scheme is inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Inappropriate Development

4. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) sets out, amongst other things, that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within a given list of exceptions. One is the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original. Policy P2 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (2019) (LP) defers to the Framework, and sets out various definitions in relation to extensions, replacement buildings and infilling. Neither the Framework nor P2 define disproportionate or set any benchmark in terms of building size uplift. It is therefore a matter of judgement.
5. The appeal property is a detached chalet style bungalow in a long, but relatively narrow, plot which is verdant and set back on lower ground in relation to Binton Lane. It is accessed via a long driveway which provides privacy from the road. The area is residential, and neighbouring dwellings tend to be detached in sizable plots.

6. The appellant has suggested the original floor space of the dwelling is just over 240 square metres (sqm). The proposed would be just less than 391sqm which equates to an increase of around 62%. The Council have corresponding figures of 252sqm original and 422sqm proposed. These equate to an increase of around 67%. The appellant's calculations are based on the submitted plans. No further detail has been provided by the Council indicating how their totals were arrived at. The figures provide an indication of the uplift in the quantitative sense, but additions can be more than a sum of their size on paper.
7. Taking the lower number, this would still amount to more than half of the original building as an increase. This would not be marginal or slight, but significant. Having regard to the guidance contained in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), it is also relevant to point out that the figures here refer to a surface area arranged over floors and say nothing about the volumetric increase of the proposed works.
8. As a sizable amount of new built form in this case would be over the first floor and two full storeys, this would include new roof space and considerable extra height. The overall scale, bulk and mass of the resulting building would be significantly larger. With this and the above in mind, the proposals would amount to disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. As such they would be inappropriate development, which is harmful to the Green Belt by definition, contrary to the protection aims of Policy P2 of the LP and the Framework as I have set them out above.

Openness

9. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. Such has a visual and spatial aspect. The latter can be taken to mean the absence of built form. The appeal scheme would extend the dwelling over more than one storey and result in a fully two storey building overall.
10. The relative seclusion of the building in the public realm sense and the semi built up nature of the surrounding area as a collection of residential buildings might limit the effect of the proposals on the visual aspect of the Green Belt's openness. That said, there would be an unavoidable, and significant, reduction in the spatial aspect of the openness of the Green Belt. This would be through the substantial amount of new built form where there was previously none. Particularly in terms of the substance of the additional height and mass of the extensions. This would result in further harm to the Green Belt which, along with the proposed development's inappropriateness, would be worthy of substantial weight

Other Considerations

11. The existing double garage would be demolished as part of the proposals. This would offset some of the additional built form sought. The garage is not insignificantly sized and would account for some of the uplift proposed. It is a double garage with a small section to the side. Taking the floor space off the proposed uplifts above, and on the lower of the set of figures, the increase in the size of the dwelling over the original would not be as considerable, taking into account the approach advocated by the SPD. Again however, it comes down to how comparable the diminutive scale and mass, and particularly the height, of the garage as a low level and inconspicuous structure next to the house is to that of the proposed works. These would be much taller and of significantly greater presence.

I remain to be convinced therefore that the loss of the garage would be sufficient a trade-off to ascribe more than moderate weight to this matter.

12. In the case of the appeal allowed for what appears to have been some substantial additions to Sandalwood, also on Binton Lane, the Inspector investigated a number of matters in reaching their conclusions. The proposals were different to the scheme before me in their nature and scope. There also appears to have been a lawful position concerning a single storey extension and an outbuilding. I do not therefore see sufficient parallels with the appeal scheme such that I would attach limited weight to this matter.
13. There are areas in which the proposals would be acceptable, and I have no reason to disagree with the conclusions of the main parties thereon. These would however, individually and collectively, be lacks of harm and thus neutral matters. They would not weigh in favour of the appeal scheme. I am also aware that this proposal follows a previously refused scheme for larger changes. It is however sufficiently clear from my findings above that this scheme has not gone far enough on the size and impact of works sufficiently to make its effect on the Green Belt acceptable.

Other Matter

14. The appeal site is within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly area of outstanding natural beauty) and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). The Council do not object to the proposed development on these grounds and having regard to their comments thereon, I have no reason to disagree. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not conflict with the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape and the protection of its setting. By association, there would be no harm to the distinctive character of the AGLV.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. The proposals would be inappropriate development in and reduce the openness of the Green Belt. These harms would be worthy of substantial weight. Taken together, the other considerations I have drawn out above would be worthy of moderate weight. It is therefore sufficiently clear that they would be incapable of clearly outweighing the harms, such that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist. Material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan, with which the proposals would conflict for the reasons I have set out. I therefore recommend the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Davies

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR