



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2025

by David Murray BA (Hons) DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/25/3372846

Long Copse, The Street, West Clandon, GUILDFORD, Surrey, GU4 7ST

- 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 James and Adele Phillips against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/01474.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a detached garage at Long Copse, The Street, GUILDFORD, GU4 7ST in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/P/01474, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached Schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal constitutes 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt;
 - The general effect on the character and appearance of the area;
 - The effect on the setting of Clandon Regis, a grade II listed building, and the character and appearance of the West Clandon Conservation Area; and
 - If inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances.

Reasons

Background

3. The appeal site comprises a large, detached dwelling set in its own garden which forms part of a ribbon of similar development on the edge of the village of West Clandon. The site lies in the West Clandon Conservation Area and the Metropolitan Green Belt. Clandon Regis, a listed building Grade II lies almost opposite on the eastern side of The Street.

4. It is proposed to erect a double garage in the front garden of the property and this would have walls of feathered edge oak cladding and a hipped roof with tiles to match the main house.

Whether inappropriate development.

5. Paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 indicates that development is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions, as set out in that paragraph, apply. Local Plan Policy P2 says that Green Belt policy will be applied in line with the Framework. The West Clandon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2034 is also part of the development plan and from which Policy 1 applies. In assessing whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development I have had regard to the Council's Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document 2023 (SPD).
6. The Council submits that the proposal should be considered under paragraph 154 (c) of the Framework which relates to the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original property. This is defined in the glossary to the Framework as the building as it existed on the 1 July 1948, or at the time of construction if built subsequently.
7. Case law has established that the term 'extension' can include a detached building depending on a combination of factors such as the position and degree of attachment. In this case I find that the position of the garage at the front of the enlarged dwelling; the clear separation distance, which the Council says would be 17.77m; and the non-domestic nature of the garage use, mean that it should not be regarded as an 'extension' to the original property. Therefore the proposal is not an exception under part (c).
8. The appellant submits that the proposal should be considered under part 154 (e) which allows 'limited infilling in villages'. The SPD indicates that 'infilling' is not confined to new dwellings but can include new buildings.
9. The Council has not indicated whether the appeal site falls within the defined settlement boundary of West Clandon, however the site and its physical surroundings suggest that it has the characteristics of being within the village. The site lies in a continuous frontage of built development and there is a continuous footway along both sides of the road at this point and the area is within the 30mph speed limit. Also, the site lies within the area covered by the 'Please drive slowly though village' sign. Overall the local area has a village feeling and character, albeit a very leafy one.
10. I am therefore satisfied that the appeal site lies in a village in the context of part (e). Further, as there are substantial neighbouring properties the erection of a new building here could be 'infilling' depending on its visual and physical impact on the locality.
11. At the site visit, I noted that the appeal site and its neighbours lie in well landscaped grounds even at this time of year when the vegetation is becoming bare of leaves. There is a low wall on the boundary with a high hedge above and mature trees and evergreen shrubs around the part of the site where the garage is

proposed. Even though the appeal site boundary projects out from that of the neighbouring property 'Three Roods' towards The Street, views of the garage would be screened from the south. Despite its location in the front garden the modest structure of the proposed garage would not appear prominent or intrusive in the street scene or appear out of place in the village environment.

12. Taking all of this into account and assessed against the guidance in the Council's Green Belt SPD I find that the appeal site lies in a village and the particular siting of this modest building would constitute limited infilling. As such the proposal reasonably meets the exception set out in part 154(e) of the Framework and is not inappropriate development.
13. There is no additional test of the effect on openness attached to this exception.

Effect on general character and appearance

14. The Council's supplementary guidance on residential extensions and alterations (2018) advises that generally garages should be sited to the side or rear of a property. It says that where they are sited in front of the building line in highly prominent locations they are unlikely to be accepted.
15. Given my analysis above regarding 'infilling', I find that the proposed garage would not be visually prominent and not harm the general character and appearance of the local street scene. The open and green character along the frontage would be maintained. The Council confirms that the scale and materials proposed for the garage are appropriate for the area. The proposal accords with the requirements of Policies D1 and H4 of the Local Plan and Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan as the garage would respond positively to local character and be of an appropriate design.

Effect on heritage assets

16. The significance of the heritage assets of the Conservation Area and the setting of Clandon Regis are referred to in the comments of the Council's Design and Conservation Officer set out in the delegated planning report.
17. From my site visit I concluded that the position and modest scale of the garage proposed would not diminish the open form of the landscaped gardens to the front of these properties and which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. Although I noted the presence of part of the flank walls of buildings at Clandon Regis that abut the footway, there would still be a grass verge, footway, low wall and landscaping on the opposite side of the road before the proposed position of the garage. This relationship would not result in a visual pinch point. The appreciation of the setting of Clandon Regis in the street scene would still remain intact and the significance of this listed building would not be diminished.
18. Overall I find that the heritage assets of the Conservation Area and the setting of Clandon Regis would not be harmed. The proposal would not harm the setting of the listed building and would preserve both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It therefore meets the provisions of Local Plan Policies D4, D19 and D20.

Planning balance

19. On the main issues I have found that the proposed garage would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would fall with the exception of being limited development in a village. On this basis I do not need to consider whether very special circumstances apply to this proposal in the Green Belt. Neither would the proposal harm the general character and appearance of the area.
20. In terms of the effect on the significance of heritage assets I have given great weight to the asset's conservation. Nevertheless, I have found that the proposal would preserve and not harm the character or the appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of Clandon Regis.
21. Overall, the proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the development plan and national guidance in the Framework when these are all read as a whole. This accord is not outweighed by any other consideration, therefore the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

22. The Council recommends that three conditions be imposed which I will consider under the same numbering. In addition to the statutory condition on the commencement of the development (No.1), the Council recommends a condition (No.2) that the external materials of the proposed garage match the house. However, the garage is shown to have feathered oak timber elevations on the submitted plans while Long Copse has mainly light rendered elevations. I will therefore vary the condition accordingly. The Council also recommends a condition that the permission is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is reasonable to ensure that the proposal maintains the character and appearance of the area and I will impose it.

Conclusion

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

David Murray

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 drawing No's 1330-620; 1330-61; 1330-600 & 1330-615.
3. The exterior walls of the garage shall be clad in oak feathered edge timber. Details of the staining or treatment of the oak shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority before the garage is erected. The roof shall be clad in roof tiles to match the existing dwelling of Long Copse.