



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/25/3370191

Knoll Hill Cottage, Knoll Lane, Corfe Mullen, Dorset BH21 3RF

- 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 & Mrs Adrian & Michelle Naylor against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2025/03051.
 - The development proposed is replace outbuilding with single storey extension. Add dormer, move front porch, add raised decking, raise height of windows/doors on rear wing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:

- whether the proposal 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 other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, so as to amount to very special circumstances.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development

3. Paragraph 154(c) of the Framework establishes that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate as long as they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
4. The 'original building' is defined in Annex 2 of the Framework as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
5. Knoll Hill Cottage (the Cottage) is a two-storey detached dwelling located on a large, irregularly shaped plot within the South East Dorset Green Belt. Adjacent to the main dwelling is a garage and Orangery and the overall character of the surrounding area is rural.
6. There is limited substantive evidence before me to adequately demonstrate that a shed/stable building, which was replaced by the Orangery was in situ on the site on 1 July 1948 or when the house was built originally. Consequently, based on the evidence before me, the shed/stable building is not part of the original dwelling and therefore the Orangery is an addition to the Cottage.

7. There is a garage on the site which the Council accepts as being part of the original dwelling. However, the Council considers the garage to have been extended since 2009. Based on the evidence before me including the planning history of the garage, there is limited substantive evidence to adequately demonstrate that the garage has not been extended since 2009, especially given the location plan for the 2009 application and the 2025 OS base site map referenced in the Council's Officer Report. Consequently, I have considered the garage extension as an addition to the original dwelling.
8. The existing extensions to the Cottage, the addition of the Orangery and the garage extension equates to around a 69% increase in footprint or approximately a 58% increase in volume.
9. The appeal scheme would result in the reduction of around 1.3m in the length of the existing garage building and that an area the size of the existing lean-to would be removed. The Framework does not define a numerical threshold for disproportionate additions and therefore it is a planning judgement.
10. Even if I was to find the total increase (including the appeal scheme) to amount to approximately 63% this is still, to my mind, a significant increase in this case. Thus, in my judgement, even with a relatively small reduction in the scale of the garage building and removal of an area the size of the existing lean-to, the appeal scheme would, when considered in conjunction with the previous additions to the Cottage, result in disproportionate additions and fail to accord with paragraph 154(c) of the Framework.
11. Regarding appeal decisions at The Chase, White Cottage and Bedford Gate Cottage, I do not have the full circumstances of these appeal decisions before me and therefore cannot be certain that they are wholly comparable to the appeal before me. Moreover, each application is determined on its own merits. Nevertheless, based on the evidence before me, the context of the appeal site and its site-specific planning history, they do not lead me to a different conclusion.
12. In conclusion, the appeal scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt given it would fail to benefit from one of the exceptions outlined in Paragraph 154 or 155 of the Framework. It therefore would conflict with Policy KS3 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1- Core Strategy (the CS) insofar as it seeks to ensure developments are not inappropriate within the Green Belt and are determined in accordance with the Framework.

Openness

13. The appellant has referred to the legal judgement of *Timmins v Gedling Borough Council* [2014] EWHC 654 regarding openness in which it was outlined that it would be wrong in principle to arrive at a specific conclusion as to openness by reference to visual impact.
14. Additionally, the appellant has highlighted *Turner v SSCLG & East Dorset Council* [2016] EWCA Civ 466. The judgement outlined that the openness of the Green Belt has a spatial aspect as well as a visual aspect. It highlighted that the absence of a visual intrusion does not in itself mean that there is no impact on the openness of the Green Belt as a result. Accordingly, that it also does not mean that there is no visual dimension to the openness of the Green Belt.

15. Furthermore, the appellant highlights in *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) Limited v North Yorkshire CC [2018] EWCA Civ 489* that the concept of openness must take its meaning from the specific context in which it falls.
16. Considering all of the above, Planning Practice Guidance sets out factors that can be taken into account when considering the openness of the Green Belt. It outlines that the openness of the Green Belt includes but is not limited to both spatial and visual aspects, duration and remediability and degree of activity¹.
17. The appeal scheme would result in an addition that would effectively fill in the gap between the existing dwelling and garage as well as the addition of a dormer. When the proposal is considered in conjunction with the existing dwelling and previous additions, the link and dormer would result in a sprawl of built form which would, to my mind, be of substantial bulk in terms of accumulative massing. Consequently, in my judgement, it would have more of an impact on openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms than the existing circumstances.
18. I acknowledge that the dormer would not be particularly visible from public vantage points. Moreover, the link element of the proposal would not be readily seen from the public highway due to its single storey character and the considerable mature hedgerow on the boundary. Whilst some views of the appeal scheme would be visible from Public Footpath SE6/34 (the PF) which is adjacent to the Cottage, it is set back considerably from the PF. It also benefits from hedgerow and vegetation along the boundary which results in a secluded character. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not result in a significant effect on the visual aspect of openness of the Green Belt.
19. I have identified above that I do not have the full circumstances of the Bedford Gate Cottage appeal decision nor do I have them for appeal decisions at 5 Chewton Farm Road and Wild Wood. Accordingly, I cannot be certain that they are wholly comparable to the appeal scheme before me.
20. Nevertheless, each application is determined on its own merits. Consequently, whilst the Inspectors in these decisions determined their respective schemes to not harm the openness of the Green Belt, they do not lead me to a different conclusion given the site-specific context and planning history of the Cottage.
21. Given all of the above, in my judgement, the appeal scheme would result in moderate harm to the spatial aspect of the openness of the Green Belt.

Other Considerations and Very Special Circumstances

22. The appeal scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the Framework advises that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It also indicates that inappropriate development is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. These will not exist unless potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
23. The appeal scheme would provide private benefits to the occupants of the Cottage by way of improved facilities, however this would in my judgement be limited.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225

24. The appellant highlights that the appeal scheme would assimilate with the Cottage in terms of design and materials and thus would be consistent with Policies HE2 and HE3 of the CS. These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure developments are of a high design quality and in this respect assimilate with the character of the surrounding area. Nevertheless, a lack of harm is a neutral factor in this case.
25. Considering all of the above, the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.

Other Matters

26. The appeal site is in the zone of influence of the Dorset Heath SAC and Dorset Heathlands RAMSAR. I have a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to assess any impact the proposed development would have upon both of these sites. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for the reasons given above, I do not need to conduct any further assessment in relation to them.

Conclusion

27. 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. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

B Astley-Serougi

INSPECTOR