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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2025

**by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 December 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/25/3375036**

**Acorn Lodge, Gubeon Wood, Tranwell Woods, Northumberland NE61 6BH**

- 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 Eric Dodd against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
  - The application Ref is 25/02610/FUL.
  - The development proposed is a RV garage.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. I have not included the full description of development from the appellant's planning application form as it makes reference to the development being retrospective and that is not in itself development. However, I was able to see on my site visit that the garage has been erected.
3. The Council considers the appeal development to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As I have no reason to take a different view and because the appellant makes no case otherwise, I have proceeded on that basis.

### Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
  - (i) The effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - (ii) The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area: and
  - (iii) Whether harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the development.

### Reasons

#### *Openness*

5. A fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness is, in effect, the absence of development and it has both a spatial and visual aspect to it.

6. The garage has resulted in a reduction in the openness of the Green Belt. This has occurred spatially by reason of its physical encroachment onto undeveloped land and visually by the erection of a building on land on which there was not previously a building.
7. For these reasons and on consideration of the scale of the development, I conclude that it has caused limited harm to Green Belt openness. The development is therefore contrary to the specific guidance within the Framework in this regard.

### *Character and appearance*

8. The appeal development has a higher eaves height than the part of the dwelling to which it is immediately adjacent to, and this creates a somewhat awkward visual relationship. However, it is otherwise of a height and scale that is subservient to the main dwelling, and which does not dominate it. It is in a position tucked away from the principal views of the dwelling that can be taken from within its curtilage. Because of the large size of the plot, the boundary treatment and the woodland screening, there is no perceptible impact on the public domain. The external facing materials and the general design are acceptable in the location in which the appeal development is situated.
9. As a whole, I find that the scale, size and design of the appeal development is acceptable and that there has not been harm caused to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area, including the open countryside. Consequently, the development accords with Policies STP 1, QOP 1, QOP 2 and HOU 9 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2022 (LP), where collectively they seek to safeguard character and appearance.

### **Other Considerations**

10. In their planning statement the appellant states that the development would be permitted development if it was not for the height of its eaves. It is worthy of note that permitted development rights are not removed from the Green Belt via legislation. However, the appellant does not repeat the claim in their appeal statement, expand upon it or rely upon it in support of their appeal case. There is therefore nothing provided to enlighten me as to the comparison, or even to give comfort that a permitted development fallback is available at the appeal property. As such I give this consideration only limited weight in favour of the appeal development.
11. Reference is made to the garage having been built on land deemed unusable due to vegetation growth and which was an eyesore, however it has been established that the land in question is tucked away and well screened from public view. It is also stated that the development has provided additional parking and has not affected parking provision, does not generate extra traffic, is only small relative to the pre-existing-built development and has not caused harm to trees, ecology, residential amenity or highway safety. Whilst I would not dispute any of those assertions, and I acknowledge that the appeal site is not in a conservation area or an area designated for environmental beauty, and that the dwelling is not listed, all of these are neutral considerations which do not offer weight in favour of the development.

12. My attention has been drawn to several other planning permissions that have been granted by the Council, but I have been provided with no details of their location or the planning considerations relevant to each specific development. They do not therefore offer support for the appeal development. Several planning conditions have been suggested by the appellant, but they would not address the matters which are fundamental to my consideration of the appeal development. These matters too do not carry weight in favour of the development.

### **Conclusion**

13. The Framework at paragraph 153 establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, and that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
14. The garage is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and has resulted in harm to its openness, albeit limited. I have not found harm to character and appearance however this is a consideration which weighs neutrally in the balance. The other considerations put forward in this case, which carry no more than limited weight in its favour, do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development conflicts with Policies STP 7 and STP 8 of the LP and with the objectives of the Framework where they seek to protect the Green Belt. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

*Graham Wraight*

INSPECTOR