



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by **A A Phillips BA(Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2026

Appeal A: APP/Q3630/C/24/3354424

Meadowlands Park and/or Weybridge Park Estates, Weybridge Road, Addlestone KT15 2QY

- The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jonathan Barlow of Weybridge Park Estates Ltd against an enforcement notice issued by Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The notice was issued on 20 September 2024.
 - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is the erection of a wall (as shown in blue on the Plan).
 - The requirements of the notice are to:
 - 1) Demolish the wall and remove all resultant waste and material from the Land;OR
 - 2) Lower the wall to a height of one (1) metre from ground level and remove all excess resultant waste and materials from the Land.
 - The period for compliance with the requirements is three (3) months.
 - The appeal is proceeding on the grounds set out in section 174(2)(f) and (g) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
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Appeal B: APP/Q3630/W/24/3351315

Meadowlands Park, Weybridge Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2RF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Weybridge Park Estates Ltd against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: RU.24/0058 is dated 12 January 2024.
 - The development proposed is erection of new front boundary wall and piers to replace the existing.
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Appeal A - The Enforcement Notice

1. The extent of the wall as shown in blue on the Plan does not represent its full length or alignment but excludes the eastern-most section and attached return. Therefore, the decision with respect to Appeal A only covers the section of wall shown on the plan attached to the enforcement notice.

Appeal A on ground (f)

2. The ground of appeal is that the steps required by the notice to be taken exceed what is necessary to achieve the purpose. The purposes of an enforcement notice are set in s173 of the Act and are to remedy the breach of planning control s173(4)(a)) or to remedy injury to amenity (s173(4)(b)). Since in this case the Notice requires the demolition of the wall and removal of all resultant waste and material from the Land or lowering the wall to a height of one (1) metre from ground level and remove all excess resultant waste and materials from the Land, it can be said that the purposes are to remedy the breach or remedy injury to amenity.

3. The appellant argues that the entrance piers replaced ones of similar scale and the gates are recessed into the site, away from the highway. I can see that there was previously gate piers and walls either side of the entrance into Meadowlands Park, but the overall scale of the new development is very significantly greater in terms of its overall scale and impact. I am aware of the alleged intended purpose of the development to improve security for residents but that does not mean that the requirements of the Notice are unreasonable or that they exceed what is necessary to achieve the purposes of the Notice. Lesser steps would not achieve the purposes and in that way the appeal on ground (f) does not succeed.

Appeal A on ground (g)

4. The ground of appeal is that the time given to comply with the requirements is too short. The three months given would be adequate to demolish the wall or to reduce its height as required by the Notice. The appellant argues that the owner should be given more time to have their appeal determined. The 3 months compliance period would run from the date of this decision. No alternative period has been put forward by the appellant.
5. Therefore the appeal on ground (g) does not succeed.

Appeal B

6. The main issues are:
 - i. Whether the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework);
 - ii. The effect on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the area;
 - iii. The effect on green infrastructure, protected trees, habitat and biodiversity; and
 - iv. If the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, or any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the development.

Whether inappropriate development

7. The Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt and its essential characteristics of openness and degree of permanence. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. In this case the allegation relates to the erection of a wall. 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 harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
8. Policy EE14 of the Runnymede Local Plan 2030 Adopted 16 July 2020 (the LP) relates to extensions, alterations and replacement buildings in the Green Belt. It is consistent with the latest Framework stating that in all cases development

proposals should maintain the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt.

9. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt and this includes any structure or erection. Therefore, the wall the subject of the current appeal is inappropriate development. However, paragraph 154 of the Framework provides an exception to inappropriate development as the replacement of a building provided the replacement building is in the same use as the building it will replace and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
10. The evidence before me is that there were previously brick walls and pillars adjacent to either side of the entrance to Meadowlands Park, but along the boundary with Weybridge Road were hedgerows and trees. The original wall had a length of approximately 6.5 metres whereas the wall the subject of this appeal is in excess of 200 metres long which is very significantly larger than the ones it replaces.
11. Consequently, the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Openness, character and appearance

12. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. By introducing new operational development where there was previously none the development reduces the openness of the Green Belt. I am mindful that visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of openness and note in this regard that the development is clearly visibly prominent from Weybridge Road, Meadowlands Park and the surrounding area, more generally and, as such, it is experienced visually.
13. Moving on to general character and appearance, a quite different concept from the openness of the Green Belt, I consider that the scale and visual appearance of the solid brick wall is very much at odds with the surroundings. Meadowlands Park is a residential park home estate outside any defined settlement boundary and is situated on the north side of Weybridge Road which connects the settlements of Chertsey and Weybridge. Meadowlands Park was formerly bounded by a dense row of mature trees and hedgerow which created an attractive verdant feature. At my site visit I noted that whilst there are some buildings in the area, the boundary along Weybridge Road in the locality is generally formed of mature trees and hedgerows.
14. The solid, high and particularly long wall contrasts greatly with the surrounding area, appearing as a monotonous visually intrusive urbanising feature in the Green Belt. My attention has been drawn to other walls in the area but the one the subject of this current appeal is of a greater scale and is more visually intrusive than others. Furthermore, I do not know the circumstances under which they were approved, if at all. Consequently, I conclude that the development has a harmful effect on the openness of the Green Belt and on the character and appearance of the area.

Green infrastructure

15. It is my understanding that trees removed from the appeal site to allow the construction of the wall were covered by a Tree Preservation Order which came into effect in June 2022 and was subsequently extended in December 2022. That

group of trees flanked the southern boundary of Meadowlands Park and protected all specimens within the defined area.

16. The Framework recognises that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Existing trees must be retained wherever possible. Furthermore, the Framework states that development resulting in the loss of or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
17. Policy EE9 of the LP also acknowledges the importance of biodiversity, geodiversity and nature conservation. Trees and woodlands form part of the green infrastructure network and help define the character of areas across Runnymede and trees can make a contribution towards both ecosystem services and amenity, including in urban areas. Proposals that affect locally protected sites will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the site. Furthermore, the Council's Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requires mature trees to be retained in all new developments and boundary treatments should contribute to the character of the area and the nature of the public realm. Trees can break up the monotony of streets, adding to the biodiversity of the area, contributing to green corridors and assisting with issues such as noise and pollution on busier streets.
18. In this case the removed of important green infrastructure has damaged the local environment and eroded the green corridor alongside Weybridge Road. The local environment has changed dramatically and now appears as a hard urban boundary rather than a pleasant green corridor which contributed to the attractive verdant appearance of the streetscene.
19. The unauthorised tree removal directly conflicts with the LP and Framework without there being wholly exceptional reasons or a suitable compensation strategy being in place. Furthermore, the removal of the green infrastructure has resulted in the deterioration of local biodiversity, compromised the character of the area and harmed the visual amenity of the Weybridge Road corridor. Therefore, the development has had a harmful effect on green infrastructure, protected trees, habitat and biodiversity, contrary to Policy EE9 of the LP, the SPD and the Framework.

Other considerations

20. The appellant has submitted that there are very special circumstances in this case, including the security of the occupants of Meadowlands Park, noise mitigation, improving the privacy of occupants, retention of the main established trees and the support of local residents.
21. I see no reason why a dense hedgerow and tree boundary would not provide an acceptable level of security to local residents and there is little evidence before me that security is a significant issue in the area. There is insufficient evidence before me to prove that the noise levels before the wall was erected were unacceptable or harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of Meadowlands Park. In addition, there is no evidence that privacy levels were unacceptable before the wall was erected and I see no reason why a well-planted dense green boundary formed of mature trees and hedgerow would not provide suitable levels of privacy for local residents.

22. I understand that some local residents now support the wall that has been erected but that alone does not mean there are very special circumstances. I accept that there are some walls along Weybridge Road, but do not know the specific circumstances that led to them being built. In any case, none that I saw at my site visit were of the scale or appearance of the development the subject of this current appeal.
23. The appellant argues that there is a fallback whereby the height of the wall could be reduced to 1 metre adjacent to the highway. For the avoidance of doubt this would be the whole length of the wall because part of it is situated adjacent to the highway and it is, in effect, a single structure. The reduction in height would have the effect of reducing its visual impact but as operational development it would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
24. Therefore, I attribute these arguments only limited weight in this case. There is insufficient evidence before me to demonstrate that any harm by reason of inappropriateness, or any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the development.

Conclusions

25. The proposal comprises inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. To be added to that harm is the harm to openness that I have identified, the harm to the character and appearance of the area and harm to green infrastructure, protected trees, habitat and biodiversity. The Framework indicates that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist, unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. I have considered the other considerations put forward, but they carry only limited positive weight. I am not persuaded therefore, that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal exist in this case. Accordingly, I conclude that the development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the Framework and the appeal should not succeed.

Formal Decisions

Appeal A

26. The appeal is dismissed and the enforcement notice is upheld.

Appeal B

27. The appeal is dismissed.

A A Phillips

INSPECTOR