



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2026

by V Simpson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 April 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/25/3374768

The Coppice, Startins Lane, Cookham, Maidenhead SL6 9AN

- 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 Paul Phelps against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 25/01852.
 - The development proposed is Ground floor extension to the existing garage to accommodate larger vehicle parking, addition of a first floor for incidental accommodation, and a 1.1m increase to the existing ridge height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The appeal site is within the Green Belt. Therefore, the main issues are;
 - whether the scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to any relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework);
 - the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. It is understood that both the house and the associated garage outbuilding on the appeal site were constructed following the grant of planning permission reference 92/00221/FULL. Nevertheless, and although connected by a wall and gateway structure, the house and the garage are several metres apart from each other. As such, and due to their differing heights, scales and designs, both visually and physically, the house and the garage read as separate buildings within the appeal site. Consequently, in this appeal, the garage structure is dealt with as an individual building.
4. Policy QP5 of the Local Plan¹ relates to development in rural areas and the Green Belt. It indicates that national Green Belt policy will be applied to development in

¹ Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead – Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 – Adopted 8 Feb 2022

rural areas of the Borough (which includes land within the Green Belt and those 'washed over' settlements within it). It also states that the Green Belt will be protected against inappropriate development, and that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development - as defined in the Framework, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. That being the case, and insofar as it is relevant to this appeal, policy QP5 of the Local Plan² is generally consistent with the parts of the Framework that relate to the Green Belt.

5. The fundamental aim of national Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. However, the Framework indicates that development would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt if it would accord with one of the exceptions at paragraph 154, or if it would accord with paragraph 155. The exception at 154.c) of the Framework 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 building.
6. What is disproportionate in the context of extensions to buildings in the Green Belt is not defined within Local Plan policy QP5 or the Framework. Consequently, whether the proposed development would amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building is a matter of planning judgment.
7. Based on the figures provided in support of the planning application, the extension would increase the footprint of the garage by over 50%. Moreover, the eaves and ridge height of the building would be raised, and the volume of the roof structure would be increased. These enlargements would facilitate the provision of first floor accommodation across most of the building, and when taken together with the increased footprint, there would be an increase in floorspace of over 100%, and a substantial increase in the volume and external dimensions of the building. Such development would amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building³.
8. It has not been demonstrated that the scheme would meet any of the other exceptions at paragraphs 154 or 155 of the Framework. As such, and for the reasons given above, the scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and policy QP5 of the Local Plan.

Effect on openness of the Green Belt

9. The appeal scheme would result in the enlargement of the garage building, and it would introduce development in spaces where currently there is none. Moreover, the upper parts of the enlarged garage would be visible from the nearby lane as well as from nearby properties and from within the gardens of the appeal site. Consequently, and albeit to a small extent, the development would reduce the openness of the Green Belt, both spatially and visually.

Other considerations

9. The implementation of the appeal scheme would provide additional space for the appellant and his family, and I am advised that this would facilitate multi-generational living at the property – to include teenagers and/or elderly relatives. However, no compelling evidence has been provided from which to conclude that

² Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead – Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 – Adopted 8 Feb 2022

³ As it was first built

the appeal scheme is the only solution to meeting the requirements of the appellant and their family. Therefore, only little weight can be attributed to the benefit of providing additional accommodation on the site that would or could be made to be suitable for occupation by teenage or elderly family members.

10. Short-term economic benefit would arise during the construction phase of the development. Nevertheless, due to the modest scale of the scheme, little weight may be attributed to this benefit.
11. The design and appearance of the development would not be incongruous with that of the house on the appeal site, and the scheme would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. However, these considerations, together with the absence of any representations objecting to the scheme, are neutral factors.

Green Belt balance

12. The appeal scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would lead to a small loss of its openness. In accordance with the Framework, substantial weight is given to the harm that would be caused by this. In this case, the other considerations do not clearly outweigh this harm. Consequently, the very special circumstances required to justify the development do not exist, and the development would therefore conflict with Local Plan policy QP5.

Other matters

13. My attention has been drawn to several other properties in the area and the Green Belt, where planning permission has been granted for sizable extensions to buildings. However, I have not been provided with sufficient information regarding these other schemes to enable the basis of any associated planning permissions to be understood. Consequently, I cannot draw meaningful comparisons between these other schemes and the scheme subject of this appeal. Nor do these other permissions lead me away from my previous findings.

Conclusion

14. 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. I therefore conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

V Simpson

INSPECTOR