



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2026 by K Hole BA (Hons)

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th June 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/D/25/3375352

Cherry Tree Cottage, Bedford Lane, Sunningdale, Ascot SL5 0NP

- 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 Fernando Gonzales against the decision of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 25/01536.
 - The development proposed is described as 'staircase extension (6.6sqm), roof raised to create new floorspace at first floor level (32.6sqm) and first floor balcony'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i) whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - ii) the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - iii) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - iv) whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether inappropriate development

4. Policy QP5 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Local Plan (2022) sets out that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined in the Framework. In that regard, Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within a given list of exceptions. One such exception is

- 154 c) 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. The appellant has accepted within their appeal statement that this is the appropriate policy test in this instance.
5. The 'original building' is defined in the Framework as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was originally built. The appeal dwelling has been previously enlarged with an extension to the side and a conservatory to the rear. The Council indicates that the original building had a floor space of approximately 82 square metres (sqm) and the proposed development combined with the previous enlargements would increase the total floorspace to approximately 195.5 sqm. The appellant has not contested these figures.
 6. The figures provided indicate that the proposed development would result in a significant cumulative increase in total floorspace of approximately 138%. I accept that the relevant development plan policies provided do not define a specific numerical threshold. Even so, the extension would also include a higher, bulky roof form. Moreover, in combination with previous extensions and without any evidence to suggest otherwise, the cumulative increases in footprint and volume when compared with the original building would also likely be significant. Taking all these factors into account, when considered cumulatively with previous extensions, the proposed development would constitute a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
 7. As such, the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to the Framework and the relevant development plan policy.

Effect on openness

8. As set out at Paragraph 142 of the Framework, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. As has been held in the High Court, openness is epitomised by a lack of buildings or development and has both spatial and visual aspects.
9. The proposed development would include additional built form where it did not previously exist and would therefore inevitably have a spatial effect on the Green Belt. While some elements of the proposed development would be less discernible from public vantage points due to their location at the rear, I observed for myself that the raised roof would be visible in views from Bedford Lane over the boundary hedging, fence and gates. Taking these spatial and visual factors together, I find that that there would be a modest effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

10. Cherry Tree Cottage is a detached bungalow of traditional design, centrally positioned within a large plot and located in a semi-rural residential area. Nearby dwellings often differ in scale, size and design and sit within a range of plot sizes. Indeed, to this side of Bedford Lane, the appeal dwelling neighbours a modern, two-storey detached dwelling within a generously proportioned plot and a pair of semi-detached dormer bungalows of traditional style with smaller plots. This provides for a varied local vernacular. Even so, due to the consistency in terms of its single storey scale and the alignment of its main roof line, the subserviency of its hipped roofed projections and the repeated materials and detailing, the dwelling

has a distinctive and cohesive traditional appearance which positively contributes to the character and appearance of Bedford Lane and the semi-rural surrounds.

11. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Wide Design Guide (2020) sets out among other things that extensions will be expected to be subordinate and respond positively to the form, scale, architectural style and materials of the original building, and developments that are over-dominant or out of keeping will be resisted. The guidance also suggests that roof alterations should be sympathetic and subservient to the design of the main building and not undermine the visual amenities of an area.
12. The raised roof would detract from the consistency of the roof line, introducing a uncharacteristic crown roof form with first-floor gables. By replicating ground floor level detailing within these gables, this would emphasise their presence above the existing tiled roof slopes. To the 'north elevation' this would combine with the overtly modern external balcony to create an unsympathetic addition which would detract from the cohesive traditional aesthetic of its host. The protrusion of the crown roof above the existing main roofline would also give it an over-dominant presence, which would be readily perceptible in views over existing boundary vegetation, fencing and gates from neighbouring properties and from Bedford Lane. For these reasons, the proposed development would not respect the aesthetic of the host dwelling.
13. Accordingly, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In that regard it would conflict with Policy QP3 of the LP which requires development to achieve high standards of design, and that respects and enhances the local character of the environment including scale, bulk, massing, proportions and materials. Furthermore, it would conflict with paragraph 135 of the Framework which seeks to achieve amongst other things developments that are sympathetic to local character.

Other considerations

14. I am aware that dwelling that has been constructed on land that used to be within the curtilage of Cherry Tree Cottage. However, this is a different form of development to that proposed and would have been subject to different policy considerations. From the evidence before me, none of the extensions to other dwellings referred to are directly comparable to the appeal proposal as they were either found not to amount to disproportionate additions based on their own site-specific circumstances or in the case of 'High Trees, Bedford' a fallback was considered to amount to very special circumstances.
15. Structures associated with equestrian and polo activities on neighbouring land do not preclude me from assessing the proposed development on its own merits against the relevant exception relating to the Green Belt location and in terms of its effect on the character and appearance of the area. In the circumstances, the examples of other development provided carry limited weight.
16. With regards to the suggestion that the proposed development would not undermine the five purposes of the Green Belt, the Framework is clear that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it meets the specified exceptions.

Green Belt Balance, Conclusion and Recommendation

17. I have found that the development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt to which I attach substantial weight. The Framework states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances.
18. As part of the assessment, I have also found that the development would result in a modest effect on the openness of the Green Belt. In addition, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. This is a high hurdle for a development proposal to overcome.
19. The other considerations put forward in favour of the proposed development carry no more than limited weight.
20. In conclusion and on balance, the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm, and the harm character and appearance of the area is not clearly outweighed by other considerations and therefore the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposed development do not exist.
21. For the reasons given, I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Hole

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

22. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR