



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/25/3372827

3 Watts Hill Cottages, Wraysbury Road, Staines TW19 6HN

- 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 M Loveridge against the decision of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref is 25/01163.
 - The development proposed is for a two storey side extension with alterations to windows and doors.
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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 proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policies;
 - ii) the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - iii) the effect of the proposal on protected species;
 - iv) whether the proposal would be acceptable in terms of flood risk; and
 - v) 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 proposal.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development

4. Policy QP5 of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Local Plan (LP) (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 paragraph 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.

5. The Framework and development plan policies before me do not provide a definition of disproportionate additions. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision from 2014 where the Inspector had regard to guidance within the supporting text of a Green Belt policy which formed part of the development plan at that time. This policy suggested various factors that might be factored in to considering extensions to properties in the Green Belt. Whilst that particular policy is no longer extant, it is well established that matters such as the floorspace, scale, footprint, massing and volume of extensions for example are factors which may indicate whether or not an addition would be disproportionate and it is ultimately a matter of planning judgement.
6. The Council's evidence sets out that the appeal dwelling has been extended from its original form. I understand that the original floor area of the dwelling was 87.82 square metres (sqm). Furthermore, the evidence before me indicates that the floor area of the existing extension is 13.75 sqm and that the proposal would have a floor area of 56 sqm. It has been calculated that when the existing and proposed extensions are combined, there would be a significant cumulative increase over and above the floor area of the original building of 79.4%. The appellant does not dispute these figures. Moreover, when taken cumulatively with the existing extension the proposal would also result in significant increases in footprint, mass and volume. Taken together, these factors indicate that the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to the Framework and Policy QP5 of the LP.

Openness

8. The Framework outlines that the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence. Openness has both spatial and visual aspects. The footprint and volume of the proposal would undoubtedly have a spatial effect. With regard to visual impact, the appeal dwelling is at the end of a private road containing a block of three terraced dwellings. The proposal would therefore be seen by neighbouring occupiers and visitors to the terrace but would be largely screened from wider public view due to the intervening space and surrounding mature vegetation between the nearest main road, footpaths and other properties in the area. Overall, the proposal would have a modest effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

Protected Species

9. The Council indicate that the area is suitable for foraging bats. Given the surrounding vegetation and that the proposed development would involve alterations to the roof, I find no reason to disagree that a bat survey is required. In the absence of such a survey, it is not possible to determine whether the proposal would have an adverse effect on bats.
10. The appellant has suggested a pre-commencement condition requiring a bat survey to be carried out and any mitigation measures to be implemented before work starts. However, OPDM Circular 06/2005 (the circular) states that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposal, is established before planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.

11. Consequently, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on protected species. In that regard, the proposed development would conflict with Policy NR2 of the LP which requires protected species to be safeguarded from harm or loss. For the same reasons, it would conflict with Chapter 15 of the Framework and specifically Paragraph 193 which states that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Flood Risk

12. The appeal site is situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3 which respectively have medium and high probabilities of flooding. In these circumstances, the Framework requires a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to be carried out. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out that any FRA needs to be appropriate to the scale, nature and location of a development. For example, where it is an extension to a dwelling (for which an application for planning permission is required) which would not significantly increase the number of people present in an area at risk of flooding, a less detailed assessment would be required to be able to reach an informed decision. Nonetheless, the Framework explains that, amongst other things, householder developments should still meet the requirements for site specific FRAs.
13. The appellant indicates that a completed Environment Agency standing advice proforma has been submitted. However, I have not been provided with a copy. In any event, the evidence suggests that it focusses on flood resistance and resilience measures for the appeal dwelling. There is no evidence before me to suggest that the development would incorporate measures to show that the development would not increase flood risk elsewhere or that it would address other elements of site-specific flood risk assessments set out at Paragraph 181 of the Framework including for example that any residual flood risk could be safely managed. Therefore, the minimum requirements for FRA set out in the PPG have not been met.
14. I can therefore only conclude that it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of flood risk. In that regard it would conflict with Policy NR1 of the LP which requires that within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and in line with the circumstances set out in the Framework, proposals will only be supported where an appropriate FRA has been carried out and it has demonstrated that development is located and designed to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is acceptable in planning terms.

Other considerations

15. I note that the proposal is of similar design to an extension at the other end of the terraced row. However, I must consider the appeal proposal on its own merits against the current national policy and development plan requirements. For the reasons set out, it does not meet the exceptions in the Framework, and development elsewhere does not alter this finding. This is also the case, even if the proposal is smaller than a previous proposal¹ on the site.

¹ LPA Ref 24/03018

16. With regards to the appeal decision² referred to, I have given greater regard to the relevant exception at Paragraph 154 c) of the Framework which relates to a measure of disproportionality against the original building and does not suggest that a modest dwelling provides scope for comparatively larger extensions or that the size and character of neighbouring dwellings is a factor.
17. I accept that the proposal incorporates design elements to respond to its host including a set back from the front extension and a lower roof line. However, design matters are distinct from an assessment against Green Belt policy.
18. I recognise that the proposal has the potential to provide improved living accommodation for occupiers of the host dwelling. However, there is nothing to suggest that the current dwelling does not provide adequate living arrangements with two reception rooms, a kitchen and two bathrooms for a two bedroomed dwelling. Therefore, I only afford limited weight to the appellant's personal desire for additional accommodation.
19. With regards to the suggestion that the proposal would not conflict with 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

20. The proposal 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.
21. As part of the assessment, I have also found that the proposal would result in a modest effect on the openness of the Green Belt. There would also be other harm in respect of the effect on protected species and flood risk. Collectively, these are matters which weigh heavily against the proposal. 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.
22. Taken in their totality, the other considerations presented in this appeal carry limited weight and so do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. As such, the very special circumstances needed to justify the proposal do not exist.
23. For the reasons given, I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Hole APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

M Russell INSPECTOR

² APP/T0355/D/142223689