

Planning Application Supporting Statement

Site: Tixley, Hookstone Lane, West End, Woking, GU24
9QP

Client: Mr Bean Chapman



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the *“Part one, part two storey rear extension to Tixley”* following the dismissal of appeal reference APP/D3640/W/23/3321866 (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.2. That appeal was submitted to the Secretary of State under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) on behalf of Mr Bean Chapman, the Appellant. It was lodged against the Surrey Heath Borough Council’s decision to refuse planning application reference number 22/0119/FFU. The appeal related to the residential properties of Oakleigh and Tixley, at Hookstone Lane, West End, Woking, Surrey, GU24 9QP. In this case, the application relates only to Tixley.
- 1.3. Notwithstanding that the appeal was dismissed, the Inspector set out that it was evident that Tixley had not been substantially extended and that further additions to that property which are not considered disproportionate could be achieved. On that basis, this proposed development has been prepared.

2. Site Context and Proposal

Description and Surroundings

- 2.1. The application site comprises one of the two conjoined traditional semi-detached, two-storey dwellings. The proposed development relates only to Tixley. The property sits within a generous plot of land along the northern boundary of Hookstone Lane. The property has external walls which can be characterised by red face brickwork, inset with white windows under a brown, non-interlocking tiled roof. The property is owned by the Applicant. The site is surrounded by mature vegetation along all of its boundaries. The ground is broadly flat and level.
- 2.2. The site is located within the Chobham Green Belt. The settlements of West End, 1km to the South, and Lightwater, 1.5km to the west, provide a limited range of services, facilities and amenities.
- 2.3. There are no other planning, historic or environmental constraints at this site.

Planning History

- 2.4. I provide a planning history of the site as derived from the Officer Report prepared for application reference 22/0119/FFU, and excluding the Oakleigh building which is not being extended as part of this proposal.

13/0506 (Tixley)

- 2.5. Refused on the 27th November 2013, application reference 13/0506 sought the *“Erection of a detached outbuilding with accommodation and storage in the roof space following demolition of existing building”*.
- 2.6. This application was refused on the basis that the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have visual amenity impacts.
- 2.7. The design and access statement of that submission set out that the existing outbuilding occupies a footprint of 61.5sqm.

21/0778/FFU (Tixley)

- 2.8. Application reference 21/0778/FFU was refused on the 14th December 2021. The application sought the *“Erection of a detached barn with roof accommodation following demolition of existing outbuilding”*.

Appeal Reference APP/D3640/W/23/3321866

- 2.9. At paragraph 7 and paragraph 10, the Inspector sets out the agreed original floorspace of building is 121.3sqm. Notwithstanding that the Applicant disagrees with this interpretation, he must abide by the Inspectors conclusion. The baseline for examining whether the proposed development is disproportionate must therefore be on the basis that the original building measured 121.3sqm.

- 2.10. The Inspector identified at paragraph 15 that Oakleigh (not part of this proposed development) had been previously extended and that the extensive additions are visually dominant and means the form and proportions of the original modest semi-detached dwelling are not readily apparent. Any addition therefore would be adding massing, adding to the overwhelming impact upon the form on the original property, and by therefore being disproportionate.
- 2.11. At paragraph 22 the Inspector states *“It is evident that Tixley has not been substantially extended, and there may be opportunity for further additions to that property that may not be considered disproportionate”*.
- 2.12. For these reasons, there is no longer any proposal to increase Oakleigh.

Proposed Development

- 2.13. The Appellant seeks planning permission for the erection of a part one, part two storey rear extension to the property known as Tixley. The overall gross internal area proposed is 158sqm which is 30 percent over the 122sqm original (existing) building.
- Demolition of original single storey rear projection (utility room) of Tixley;
 - Reconfiguration of the ground and first floor of Tixley and erection of a part one, part two storey rear extension;
 - Replacement of existing double bi-fold doors along the rear elevation of Tixley.
- 2.14. While we shall put forward revised figures, the thrust of the application is that the proposed development is an extension to the semi-detached properties of Oakleigh and Tixley that, combined, do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the two buildings.

3. Legal and Planning Policy Context

- 3.1. The Legal and Planning Policy Context relevant to the consideration of this appeal is set out below. Any proposed development must be judged against the relevant Development Plan and other Government planning policy and guidance. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 together require that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2. For the purposes of this appeal, the Officer Report confirms Development Plan for Surrey Heath Borough Council consists of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2012) and the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policy (2022-2028). There is not a made Neighbourhood Development Plan at the application area.

3.3. **Planning Policy Context**

The following planning policies are either referred to by the Council in the previous application (22/0119/FFU) within the Decision Notice and Officer's Report

Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policy 2011-2028

- CPI: Spatial Strategy
- DM9: Design Principles

Supplementary Planning Documents (1998)

- Residential Design Guide
- West End Village Design Statement

- 3.4. The following planning policies are either referred to by the Council in the Decision Notice and Officer's Report for application reference (22/0119/FFU)

Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policy (2011-2028)

CPI: Spatial Strategy

- 3.5. The supporting text to this policy (Paragraph 5.6) states that "Inappropriate development within the countryside will include proposals that cause harm to its intrinsic character and beauty, landscape diversity, heritage and wildlife". The policy sets out the smaller villages, including West End, are inset within the Green Belt. These villages have limited capacity to accommodate development and this will be achieved primarily through redevelopment of existing sites.

DM9: Design Principles

- 3.6. Policy DM9 on Design Principles sets out development will be acceptable where it achieves design principles including, among other things: high quality design; respect and enhancement to the local character of the environment; and protection for trees and vegetation worthy of retention. The proposed development complies with this policy.

Supplementary Planning Documents (1998)

Residential Design Guide

- 3.7. This Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Residential Design Guide) supports Local Plan design policies by setting out what the Council considers to be good residential design. Its purpose is to provide guidance to the development industry, the Council and the public on how to ensure that the Borough's future housing development has the required high quality and inclusive design to help deliver the great place, community and future desired for Surrey Heath. The Guide sits alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, other Borough design guidance documents relating to local character. The proposal complies with the Residential Design Guide therefore no further discussion is necessary on this matter.

West End Village Design Statement

- 3.8. The Village Design Statement sets out 14no. guidelines and defines the 10no. character areas of the area. There is no conflict between the proposed development and the Design Statement.

Other Material Considerations

NPPF Planning Policy Framework

- 3.9. The revised NPPF was published in December 2023 and sets out the Governments planning policies for England. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. For decision-making this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted (Paragraph 11). The following NPPF paragraphs are considered relevant to this application 142, 152, 153, 154.
- 3.10. Paragraph 142 states that Green Belt serves five purposes:
- *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
 - *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*
 - *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment*
 - *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
 - *To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land."*
- 3.11. Paragraph 152 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 3.12. Paragraph 153 states that 'very special circumstances' (VSC) 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.

- 3.13. Exceptions to inappropriate development are defined within Paragraph 154 with regards to the construction of new buildings, and relate to:
- 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;*
- 3.14. The abovementioned policies and material considerations are assessed in turn against the proposal in the section below.

4. Assessment

- 4.1. An assessment has already been carried out under application reference 22/0119/FFU and appeal reference APP/D3640/W/23/3321866 (**Appendix 2**) for a larger development proposal. There has been no change to the development plan since those decisions, and the changes in this proposal amount to a reduction in what was proposed previously.
- 4.2. The site remains in an 'open countryside' area beyond the limit of any settlement boundary. The site remains in the London Area Green Belt.
- 4.3. Policy CPI of The Core Strategy is clear that "*within the countryside the current extent of the Green Belt will be maintained*". In addition, paragraph 5.6 in providing supporting text to the policy, it is stated "*Inappropriate development within the countryside will include proposals that cause harm to its intrinsic character and beauty, landscape diversity, heritage and wildlife*".
- 4.4. There is no floorspace definition of what amount of development might contribute to a proposal representing inappropriate development. However, the proposed development can be considered alongside appeal references APP/D3640/W/23/3321866 (regarding this site) and APP/D3640/W/23/3324102 (at Chobham Adventure Farm).
- 4.5. The Inspector at 3321866 has examined the building in accordance with its original floorspace measuring a total of 121.3sqm. This is accepted as the baseline in this case. At paragraph 14 the Inspector set out:

"proportionality is a matter of planning judgement, not solely dependent on percentage increases."
- 4.6. At paragraph 22 the Inspector set out:

It is evident that Tixley has not been substantially extended, and there may be opportunity for further additions to that property that may not be considered disproportionate.
- 4.7. The Inspector at 3324102 set out the following at paragraph 8 and 9 accordingly:
- 4.8. and it has been carried out on bigger scheme. No change to development plan. This application is a reduction.

8. No additional parking is proposed as part of the scheme and I have assessed it as such. Using the Council's figures, the extension would result in a 28.7% increase in volume, 34.97% in footprint and 36.16% in floor space. The proposed extension would be lower in height than, with a roof slope that follows, that of the existing building which already has first floor accommodation and a substantial footprint. Therefore, even taken with any previous additions, the extensions would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building

9. Consequently, the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, there is no requirement to consider the effect of the scheme on openness or the purposes of the Green Belt.

- 4.9. On this, the applicant has put forward a development proposal which is proportionate to the existing building both in terms of planning judgement, and in percentage increases (the proposed development represents a 30% increase in GIA, which is a smaller percentage than the 34.97% / 36.16% put forward in 3324102.
- 4.10. Consequently, the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, there is no requirement to consider the effect of the scheme on openness or the purposes of the Green Belt. Without prejudice to this view, the applicant does set out the Green Belt considerations for completeness.

Green Belt Considerations

- 4.11. There are four fundamental planning issues which need to be addressed in determining the suitability of the proposed development within the Green Belt, as follows: -
- Whether the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposal on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt; and,
 - Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations as to amount to very special circumstances (VSC) to justify the development.

Whether the Proposal Represents Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

- 4.12. The application site is within the Green Belt and therefore such benefits must be balanced against the relevant policies which seek the protection of Green Belt land as contained in Policy CPI of the Core Strategy (2012) as well as under paragraphs 152 – 154 of the NPPF (2021). Should the proposed development be considered to represent disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, then the development would be considered inappropriate.

The Effect of the Proposal on the Openness of the Green Belt

- 4.13. The NPPF sets out that ***“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*** (Paragraph 137). In terms of openness, the extent to which development keeps land permanently open is a matter of fact and degree, and the word ‘openness’, which is not defined in the NPPF or statute, is to a large extent subjective. It may be regarded as being the absence and/or degree of absence of built development and/or other urbanising features associated with development, including development and uses of land which impact upon openness through the presence of man-made objects/features.

- 4.14. It is also clear that the objective of Green Belt policy relates to spatial planning, rather than landscape or visual impact which are separate considerations and, together with any other planning harm, falls into the “any other harm” (under NPPF Paragraph 153) rather than Green Belt harm category for the purposes of Green Belt policy.
- 4.15. Furthermore, it could be considered that the extent of harm to the openness of the Green Belt may be more significant where development is located further away from existing clusters of existing development, and/or is more visible from within or outside the site as a result of its actual or perceived scale or bulk.
- 4.16. We consider that the proposed development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development is largely within a ‘U’ shape, meaning that it is largely an infilling development. The visual impact from the west shall be smaller. The visual impact from the north shall be very similar in that the proposed development (largely within the ‘U’ shape) will continue to appear in its context as residential development. From the east it is unlikely that there will be a perceptible change. From the south, a modest porch will be visible however that will be seen within the context of the dwellings. The development is confined to the main building, and requires the removing outbuildings. For all of these reasons then, the Appellant considers that there would be a nil impact on openness, compared to the existing development. This is due to the removal of outbuilding, neatening the building structure, infilling the ‘U’ shape and due to the mature existing screening that forms a strong and robust visual barrier.

The Effect of the Proposal on the Purposes of Including Land in the Green Belt

- 4.17. The extent to which harm is caused by conflict with any purpose of the Green Belt will depend upon the nature and location of the proposed development. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF identifies that the Green Belt serves five purposes, which we address in turn below.
- i) *To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up-areas*
- 4.18. The policy objective of the first purpose of the Green Belt is to control the extension or ‘sprawl’ of large built-up areas into the Green Belt through a presumption against such development. The application site is not adjacent to a large built-up area. It is instead situated in the open countryside and the proposed development could not be considered an urban development as it relates to an existing dwellinghouse in the open countryside. The development should not be considered harmful to the Green Belt in this regard.
- ii) *To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*
- 4.19. The policy objective of the second purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent neighbouring towns from merging. The appeal site is to the north of the defined settlement boundary of West End, and approximately 2.7km to the west of Chobham. The site is bound by built development to the east. The location of the two dwellings is not in a sensitive part of the Green Belt where there is a risk of neighbouring towns merging. The proposed development would reconfigure the existing dwelling. Development would therefore be confined to the immediate

vicinity of the existing dwelling, and the dwelling and its curtilage would not encroach onto undeveloped land beyond the existing site. Therefore, even if this part of the Green Belt was sensitive to further development, and had a risk of encroachment, the characteristics of the proposed development are such that it would have negligible impact on this purpose. It cannot therefore be considered that the proposal would lead to a merging of towns, or that it would have a significant effect on the potential merging of towns as a result of occupying an area of land between neighbouring towns. The application proposal would not, therefore, be harmful to the Green Belt in this regard.

iii) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

4.20. The third purpose of the Green Belt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. In this regard, the appeal site is in the open countryside beyond a defined settlement boundary. Similarly to the point above, the proposed development would not result in the expansion of the residential dwellings or their curtilage into undeveloped areas outside of the curtilage, or further into the countryside. The proposed development shall carry out demolition as part of its reconfiguration in order to concentrate the mass of the development and reduce its spread within the plot of land. This should result in an improvement to the visual appearance of the site. The proposed development will be constructed of materials to match the existing, on which the Council has accepted would not conflict with the development plan. The proposed development is limited to an area already occupied by built development. Encroachment will be extremely limited, and so the proposed development should not be considered to materially conflict with this purpose.

iv) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

4.21. The policy objective of the fourth purpose of the Green Belt is to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. There are no conservation areas that may be impacted by the proposed development. The proposed development, by reason of its siting, scale, massing and location therefore could not harm the setting and special character of historic towns. It is not considered to undermine this purpose of the Green Belt.

(v) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.22. The final purpose of the Green Belt is to assist in urban regeneration by ensuring that the Green Belt is not developed at the expense of sites within urban areas which are able to deliver the development.

4.23. On this, we are not aware of (and the Council have not suggested that) the site and its surrounding area have significant regeneration needs. The proposed development relates to an existing dwelling, so by definition the proposed development could not take place on derelict or other land in an urban area. The proposed development would not, therefore, be harmful to this Green Belt purpose.

Any Other Harm Resulting from the Proposal

Character of the Area

4.24. No other harm has been identified by the Appellant.

Whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations as to amount to very special circumstances (VSC) to justify the development

4.25. The Inspector in 3321866 determined that there would be no very special circumstances to justify the development.

4.26. Without prejudice to the fact that the Appellants do not consider that the development needs to demonstrate very special circumstances as it is not inappropriate development.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the *“Part one, part two storey rear extension to Tixley”* following the dismissal of appeal reference APP/D3640/W/23/3321866.
- 5.2. The proposed development has been designed following the Inspector's comments with regard to the Inspector's decision in appeal decision reference APP/D3640/W/23/3321866. It is sensitively and proportionally designed, representing an increase of 30% gross internal area versus the original building. At appeal reference APP/D3640/W/23/3324102, the Inspector set out that an extension of 34.97% in footprint and 36.16% in floorspace would not be disproportionate.
- 5.3. The proposed development is not considered to be disproportionate, and it complies with the development plan. The proposal would not harm the purposes of the Green Belt. As such, there is no requirement to consider the effect of the scheme on openness or the purposes of the Green Belt.

Appendices
