



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2025

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/25/3358851

Granham House Farm, Higher Rads End, Eversholt, Central Bedfordshire, MK17 9ED

- 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 J Moxham against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/24/02162/FULL.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side/rear extension and utility/boot room in courtyard area.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side/rear extension and utility/boot room in courtyard area at Granham House Farm, Higher Rads End, Eversholt, Central Bedfordshire. MK17 9ED in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CB/24/02162/FULL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr J Moxham against Central Bedfordshire Council and this is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. There are two main issues. Firstly, whether the proposed extensions would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt; and secondly, the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. The appeal site is located in a rural area on a narrow lane at the edge of Eversholt. It lies within the Green Belt. The appeal dwelling is a two storey detached house

set close to the highway and on an extensive plot. There is a detached single storey garage to the north-east of the dwelling which backs onto the lane. A wall and pedestrian gate connect the house to the garage. The dwelling has been extended in the past by the addition of a single storey conservatory to the rear. The parties agree that the original dwelling had a floorspace of some 267m² and that the conservatory has added about 20m² to this. The proposed extensions would add a further 77m². It is agreed between the parties that the overall increase in floorspace would therefore be some 36%.

5. Policy SP4 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (LP), adopted 2021, states that “Within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with government guidance contained in the NPPF [National Planning Policy Framework] and NPPG [National Planning Practice Guidance]”. It goes on to state that “within settlements washed over by the Green Belt, applicants will be expected to pay particular attention to the quality and design of development proposed, to ensure that development respects and is sympathetic to the character and openness of the settlement and its surroundings”.
6. The NPPF identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. For extensions and alterations to buildings, these should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. “Original building” is defined in the NPPF as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after this date, as originally built.
7. The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (DG), 2023, states that, as a guiding principle, to be considered as proportionate the original building should not be added to by more than 60% of footprint, floorspace and volume. The impact of the extension in terms of massing and design will also be considered. Clearly, the proposed extensions, coupled with the previous extension, would result in a building well within the 60% limit. I have therefore considered whether the massing and design of the proposed extensions would nevertheless appear visually disproportionate to the original building.
8. The Council does not suggest that the single storey infill addition to provide a utility and boot room would appear disproportionate and I agree. The two storey extension would comprise a side/rear addition that would sit adjacent to an existing two storey gable ended projection, facing to the south-east across the garden of the dwelling. The height and proportions of the proposed extension would be similar to the existing projection and would end in a similar gable. Although the detailed design would be different in terms of the lack of a bay and more modern fenestration, this would be arranged centrally within the rear elevation and compliment that in the existing dwelling. The result, when seen from the rear, would be a twin gable, separated by a valley, which would be in keeping with the scale and design of the original dwelling.
9. When seen from the side, the extension would echo the scale and proportions of the existing rear projection, with a similar eaves and ridge height and limited fenestration. It would be shallower than the existing projection which would remain partly visible at the north-west end, closer to the lane. Overall, when seen from

within the site or from the highway the two storey extension would appear as a sympathetic and proportionate addition to the original dwelling.

10. It is therefore concluded on the first main issue that the proposed extensions would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In consequence, there would be no conflict with LP Policy SP4 or with the NPPF insofar as they seek to control extensions to buildings in the Green Belt. The Courts have determined that where development is found to be “not inappropriate” it should not be regarded as harmful either to the openness of the Green Belt or to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the other main issue.

Character and appearance

11. I have already found that in terms of massing and design the proposed extensions would not appear disproportionate to the host dwelling. However, in its second reason for refusal the Council cites LP Policy HQ1 which is a general design policy that covers other design issues. In particular, it is expected that in addition to massing and design, materials and appearance relate well to the existing local surroundings and reinforce local distinctiveness, both built and natural, such that proposals enhance or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area and create a sense of place. Reference is also made to the DG and in particular the expectation that an extension should be subservient to the host dwelling.
12. In terms of materials, these would match the existing dwelling which is rendered and painted off-white with dark framed casement windows. I consider that this would ensure that the extensions were in keeping with the host dwelling. Moreover, the proposed extensions would be of a scale and design that ensured they appeared subservient to the host dwelling. Overall, they would therefore have an acceptable appearance that would be sympathetic to the host dwelling, reinforce local distinctiveness and maintain the sense of place of the host dwelling in the street scene and the wider area.
13. It is concluded on the second main issue that the proposed extensions would have a satisfactory effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. In consequence, they would comply with LP Policy HQ1 and the DG.

Conditions and Conclusion

14. The Council suggests two conditions in addition to the statutory commencement condition. I agree that the development should be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in materials that match the existing dwelling in order to provide certainty and to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.
15. The Council's Highways Officer suggests conditions regarding the submission of schemes for vehicle parking and the parking of contractor's vehicles. However, the appeal site already has a large gravel-surfaced area for parking which could accommodate both vehicles associated with the dwelling and those belonging to contractors. I therefore consider that further conditions are neither necessary nor reasonable.

16. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including civil matters regarding vehicle parking on neighbouring land, and the discontinued use of an alternative access in favour of one shared with other dwellings which is not material to the appeal before me, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR