
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by **K Reeves BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/D/24/3350369

**Saddle Stones, 5 Saltford Court, Saltford, Bath And North East Somerset
BS31 3EB**

- 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/s Selwood against the decision of Bath and North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00360/FUL.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension, new front gable facade, first floor rear balcony and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. On 12 December 2024, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). During the appeal the parties were invited to comment on the relevance of the revised Framework to the appeal proposal. In my decision, I have had regard to the parties' written responses.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies; and
 - whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Saltford Conservation Area.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. The appeal site is partly within the Bristol/Bath Green Belt. The Framework attaches great importance to Green Belts. It states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and identifies the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
5. Policy CP8 of the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan: Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan incorporating the Local Plan Partial Update (adopted January 2023) (LP) states, amongst other things, that the openness of the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning

policy. Policy GB1 of the LP states that development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt should not prejudice but seek to enhance the visual amenities of the Green Belt. Policy GB3 states that proposals to extend or alter a building in the Green Belt will only be permitted provided they would not represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Taking the above policies together, they address detailed Green Belt policy in a similar manner to the Framework and are consistent with it.

6. More detailed guidance on development in the Green Belt is given in the Framework. In particular, Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that the development in the Green Belt is inappropriate development. However, it lists certain forms of development that are not regarded to be inappropriate. This includes 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 (Paragraph 154(c)).
7. The site comprises a detached two storey dwelling with a single storey detached garage to the front of the dwelling. It is situated on the edge of Saltford, amongst a group of residential properties that are accessed from a private road that passes along the side of the Grade II listed Saltford House. The property has a large garden that is currently split into two parts with the dwelling sitting in the southern smaller part.
8. The Framework's glossary defines 'original building' as "a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally". The original building, including the detached garage, is located outside the Green Belt. However, the majority of the proposed extension is within the Green Belt.
9. The Bath and North East Somerset Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2008) (SPD) explains that the development plan allows some additions and alterations to be made to dwellings in the Green Belt providing that they do not represent disproportionate addition over and above the size of the 'original dwelling'. It advises that when deciding whether or not an extension is disproportionate, the cumulative increase in volume of all extensions as a percentage of the original dwelling and the character of the dwelling and its surroundings will be considered.
10. In terms of the volume of all extensions, the SPD states that in many circumstances a well-designed extension resulting in a volume increase of about a third of the original dwelling would be more likely to be acceptable, and that extensions to dwellings which exceed this volume increase are more likely to be disproportionate with the original dwelling and therefore harmful.
11. The proposed extension would straddle the Green Belt boundary. The appellants state that 231.83 cubic metres of the extension would be within the Green Belt and 124.3 square metres would be outside. The original building has been previously extended, and it is also stated that the cumulative percentage increase in the volume of the building after the construction of the proposed extension would be 66%. However, the increase in volume that would be located within the Green Belt is quoted by the appellants as being 32.59%. The Council has not disputed these figures, and I am therefore content to rely on them.
12. There are two potential options for assessing whether the extension would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, having

regard to any previous extensions to the dwelling. One option is to assess what is proposed just on that part of the site that lies within the Green Belt in relation to inappropriateness. The alternative is to treat the whole of the proposed development as being in the Green Belt. The original building, the existing extensions and part of the proposed extension are outside the Green Belt. Those extensions cannot therefore have a material effect on openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in the Framework, nor can it be regarded that they contribute to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, it would be logical to take the former approach, and in relation to inappropriateness, I have therefore assessed just that part of the proposed development that lies within the Green Belt.

13. The volume of the proposed extension that would be located within the Green Belt would be less than a third of the volume of the original building. Furthermore, it would be erected within an existing garden area that is substantially screened from wider views by mature planting, and the proportions, massing and bulk of the extension within the Green Belt would be physically and visually subservient to the original building. Having regard to the advice contained in the SPD, the proposed development situated within the Green Belt does not represent a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.
14. For these reasons, the proposed development would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Consequently, there would not be a conflict with openness or Green Belt requirements of Policy CP8 of the LP or the Framework.
15. Case law establishes that where the development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, applying the exceptions identified in the Framework, it should not be regarded harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. As the proposed development is not inappropriate development, as per Paragraph 154(c) of the Framework, an assessment on the effect of the proposed development on the openness is therefore not required. Likewise, very special circumstances do not need to be demonstrated in order for the proposal to be considered acceptable.

Saltford Conservation Area

16. The appeal site is partly within the Saltford Conservation Area (CA). The CA encapsulates the historic core of Saltford. The significance of the CA is derived, in part, from the well-preserved village character, the retained historic pattern of development and plot layout, the large proportion of historic buildings and the consistency of the building materials.
17. The existing dwelling is within the CA. It is finished externally with natural random rubble stone under a double Roman tiled roof. The dwelling was constructed in the 1980s as part of a small development of residential properties built to the north and east of the Grade II listed Saltford House, known as Saltford Court. The dwellings in Saltford Court are mainly detached buildings and there is a pair of semi-detached dwellings that were formed through the conversion of a historic coach house.
18. Public views of the property from within the CA are limited as it sits behind the substantially sized Saltford House. However, there are clear, unobstructed views from Saltford Court of the property, and the proposed development would therefore be publicly visible from within the CA, albeit from relatively localised views. In terms of views from outside the CA, the mature planting that forms the

northern boundary of the garden would restrict views of the proposed development when looking into the CA from the wider countryside.

19. The majority of the proposed extension would be outside the CA as it would straddle the boundary. The proposed glazed link, which would join the host building with the rest of the extension, and a part of the natural stone finished section of the extension would be situated in the CA. The rest of the extension would be outside the CA but sit within its setting.
20. The natural stone finished section of the extension would have a form and finish that would be in keeping with the host building. However, the glazed link would be a modern introduction into the CA, and it would not be reflective of the traditional vernacular of this part of the CA. I recognise that Saltford Court is a 1980s development but it is clear that there was an effort to ensure that it was congruent with the historic environs it was constructed within. The glazed link would not be congruent with the surrounding built form and despite it being a small element of the scheme, it would detract from the prevailing character of the street scene. Whilst the height of the extension would be lower than the ridge of the host building, the overall scale of the proposed development would represent a substantial addition to the property, significantly increasing the width and resulting in a visually prominent and dominant building on a street with well-proportioned dwellings. The new façade on the front of the existing building would only serve to exacerbate the jarring nature of the proposal.
21. I acknowledge that the majority of the extension would be outside the CA, but the view from within the CA would be of a sizeable extension that detracts from the existing character and appearance of the host building. In any event, the part of the extension outside the CA would have a negative impact on its setting.
22. I also note that the effect on the CA would be localised, but this doesn't negate the negative effect that it would have on the character and appearance of this part of the CA. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
23. In terms of the harm to the CA, the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the scale and nature of the proposals, the degree of harm would be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances the Framework indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
24. It is explained in the planning application submission that the current layout of the house does not work well for the owners, and they need additional space to house their large family unit. It is also stated that the stepped access into the dwelling would be replaced with a level threshold. I acknowledge that there would be improved living accommodation for the appellants and their family, but this would not amount to a public benefit. Notwithstanding this, it has not been demonstrated that an alternative scheme cannot be achieved that would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. As such, these benefits carry limited weight.
25. The above stated benefits are therefore insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the CA and the considerable importance and weight it carries.

26. For these reasons, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with Policies D2, D5 and HE1 of the LP, insofar as they seek for development to respond positively to the site context, massing, scale and local vernacular, building facades to be well designed and extensions to complement and enhance the host building, and development to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of heritage assets.

Other Matter

27. The site is within the setting of the Grade II listed Saltford House. The listing includes the attached garden walls to the north and west of the building. The Historic England listing description states that it is a detached house and attached garden walls that dates from the 18th Century and has early and late 19th Century alterations and additions. It is possible that the building was designed for his own occupation by the amateur architect, Thomas Bennett. The significance of the listed building is derived, in part, from it being a good example of an 18th Century house, the retention of some original features, and its prominence and status in the historic core of Saltford.
28. There would be limited intervisibility between the listed building and the proposed development. The development would be seen in the foreground when viewed from the fields to the north of the site. But this view would be limited by the mature planting along the northern boundary of the appeal site. The dwelling itself would screen the proposed development from someone within the garden of the listed building. As such, the extension would not visually compete with the listed building's primacy in the historic core of Saltford. Additionally, the development would not compromise the approach to Saltford House and the appreciation of its setting. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Grade II listed Saltford House, and it would have a neutral impact on its significance and special interest.

Conclusion

29. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

K Reeves

INSPECTOR