



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2025

by **G Ellis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/D/25/3364530

Rose Cottage, Monks Green Lane, Brickendon, Hertfordshire SG13 8QL

- 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 George Phillips against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 3/24/2152/HH.
 - The development proposed is a 'substantial rear extension to the property'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. For clarity, any references in my decision to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and its paragraph numbers are to the latest 2025 version. The appellant's appeal statement refers to the provisions allowing for the extension and alteration of a building in the Green Belt as paragraph 149; however, this is paragraph 154.

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 the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and its relationship with Monks Green Farmhouse (Listed Building); and
 - on the basis that the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, 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 required to justify the development.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development

4. Policy GBR1 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 (EHDP) indicates that planning applications within the Green Belt will be considered in line with the provisions of the Framework. The Framework establishes that development within the Green

Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless one of the specified exceptions applies. Exception (c), as set out in paragraph 154 of the Framework, allows for the extension and alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. Rose Cottage is a modest two-storey cottage with an elongated single-storey element to the side. The proposal would effectively replicate this form, creating an 'L' shaped property with a two-storey element at the end of the proposed new wing. There would be a significant increase in the size of the property, visually appearing to have doubled in size, with the length of the new element similar to the existing building. The Council indicates that the increase in footprint would be 83% and that there would be a 75% increase in volume compared to the original building. The appellant does not dispute these figures.
6. Such a level of increase in the size of the building can only be considered to be disproportionate and would be contrary to paragraph 154(c) of the Framework. The proposal would therefore constitute inappropriate development and would, by definition, be harmful to the Green Belt. The proposal would therefore be in conflict with the Framework and EHDP policy GBR1, which aims to safeguard the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
7. As a result of the increase in the building's footprint and massing, there would also be a reduction in openness. The extension is to the rear, but it runs parallel to the road. Due to the setback and boundary hedging, it would in part be screened, but it would still have a visual presence and would also increase the spread of built form to the east. The appeal property is set within the established grouping of buildings which form Monks Green, and as such, the impact would be limited and localised. Nonetheless, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, to which there would be a degree of harm in addition to that arising from the inappropriate nature of the development.

Character and Appearance

8. Rose Cottage is part of a linear collection of buildings to the east of Monks Green Farmhouse, which is Grade II listed. The Council advise that these were ancillary buildings to the farm which has subsequently been subdivided. The buildings are now in residential use, with Rose Cottage at the southern end. From my general observations, the group of buildings do have the appearance of a farmstead, although there has clearly been a range of alterations and conversions. It is, however, also noted that the consultation response from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Advisor indicates, referring to an 1888-1915 OS Map, that Rose Cottage is not part of the curtilage of Monks Green Farmhouse. I have not been provided with any specific details, including the listing or any planning history; therefore, there is limited evidence before me to understand the evolution of the buildings to their current arrangement and the relationship with the curtilage of the Farmhouse.
9. Notwithstanding this, I agree with the Council that, having regard to the age, vernacular style and materials of Rose Cottage, it possesses heritage value with historic and architectural significance. As such, it would be considered a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of the Framework.

10. The siting of the extension directly off the main façade of Rose Cottage would obscure its key features and fundamentally change the form of the property. The modest cottage would effectively become the corner building and would be consumed by the other elements. A symmetry would be created but as an extension it would not be subservient, which is the approach generally advocated by EHDP policy HOU11(a).
11. As a result, the development would significantly alter the character and appearance of Rose Cottage to the detriment of its architectural interest and the legibility of the historic building. The proposal would also notably alter the composition of the group of buildings, creating a significant projection to the east into the open garden area. No alterations are proposed to the west elevation, and with the proposed development sited to the other side, the listed building would not be directly affected by the proposed development.
12. Overall, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of Rose Cottage and would fail to preserve its heritage value. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to EHDP policies HOU11 and DES4, which together promote a high standard of design and seek to ensure that extensions are of a size and scale appropriate for the character of the existing dwelling.
13. I have not found direct conflict with EHDP policy HA7 regarding the relationship with the listed building; however, there would be conflict with policies HA1 and HA2, which aim to preserve heritage assets, including non-designated assets.

Other Considerations

14. I recognise that the design has sought to reflect the existing building and that the proposal would modernise and increase the accommodation. The appellant indicates that the development is intended to enable younger family members to be part of the working farm business. No business case or other details have been provided in relation to any specific needs, and there is no indication that Rose Cottage does not currently provide an appropriate standard of living accommodation. Therefore, I have not given any weight to these aspects and have considered the proposal as an extension to an existing residential property.
15. It is indicated that there are examples where similar scales of extensions have been allowed, although no specific cases have been referenced, and each proposal is to be considered on its own merits.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

16. I have found that the appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the Framework advises that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. There would be harm to the character and appearance of Rose Cottage and its heritage, with the associated conflict with the development plan policies, which also weigh against the development.
17. The other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the Green Belt and other harm that I have identified. Overall, the very special circumstances necessary to overcome the Green Belt harm have not been demonstrated. As such, the

development would conflict with the provisions of the Framework and EHDP policy GRB1.

18. For the reasons explained, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Ellis

INSPECTOR