
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2025 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/25/3361869

70 Station Road, Stanbridge, Central Bedfordshire LU7 9JF

- 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 Parkinson against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03696/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described as “raising of roof, 2 storey front extensions, 2 storey rear extensions, insertion of rear dormer and external alterations.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure & Preliminary Matter

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.
3. The description on the application form differs to the decision notice. However, I am satisfied that the original description accurately describes the development and is therefore reflected above.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt; b) the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and c) if the scheme would be inappropriate development, whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Inappropriate Development

5. Policy SP4 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2021 (LP) defers to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) for the assessment of development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 154(c) of the Framework explains that the extension or alteration of a building in the Green Belt might not be inappropriate development therein, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. There is some additional guidance in the form of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (DG) which refers to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt to not be more than 60% of footprint, floorspace and volume. There is no evidence to suggest that what is on site is not original. The main parties

agree that the floorspace of the proposal would amount to a 68% increase based on the original building.

6. The DG is a guide and is not tied to policy. Nevertheless, it is clear that the proposal would result in a significant increase in the region of over half of the house again. The enlarged building would be significant in height and mass over the original. Whilst the single storey timber cladded element is to retain some of the original modest character, most of the bungalow will be subsumed by the proposal and would not be read as the original building. Its attempt of lowering the eaves to try and reduce the appearance of its height and roof forms would still be significant and clearly substantially larger than the original building. The visible land take would be minimal; however, it would create a substantially larger living space and would overall be visually obvious.
7. Taking this and the above in account, the proposal would represent disproportionate additions to the original dwelling. Which consequently would be seen as inappropriate development to the Green Belt by virtue of conflicting with Paragraph 154(c) of the Framework. This would also, by association, conflict with Policy SP4 of the LP which, amongst other things, seeks to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Openness

8. Openness is one of the key characteristics of the Green Belt. It has been held that openness has a visual and spatial aspect. The latter can be taken to mean the absence of built form.
9. The proposal would have a limited increase in footprint, it would however have a substantial increase in height and mass. Resultantly, it would be visually prominent in its plot and thus reduce the visual aspect of the Green Belt's openness. Even though it would be a residential building remaining in a residential context, it's overall height increase would also have an unavoidable reducing effect on the openness of the Green Belt in the spatial aspect sense being additional built form where there was previously none.
10. The existing green coverage of the site would limit the visual effect of the scheme but would not be capable of reducing its spatial effects. Such that the proposed development would unacceptably affect the openness of the Green Belt. This would further conflict with the aims of Policy SP4 as it refers to the Framework which itself, amongst other things, seeks to maintain the Green Belt in the interests of its openness and permanence.

Other Considerations

11. The Council have not identified any other harms arising from the proposal; but a lack thereof would be neutral.
12. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of fallback positions which include a single storey rear extension, single storey side extension and roof raising to insert dormers. There is some dispute between the main parties that one of the positions cannot be formally considered as a fallback scheme. However, for the purposes of this appeal and based on the evidence provided, I am satisfied all three schemes have the potential to be implemented in planning terms. I understand that the appellant has submitted a statutory declaration to confirm that

they will exercise their rights to carry out the previous permissions so there is a very reasonable prospect of them being implemented. Be this as it may, consideration must be had for the scheme in relation to the appeal proposal.

13. I appreciate that the combination of extensions would result in a total floor space to be larger than the appeal proposal, however, and as above, the assessment is more than a product of its floorspace and is also about the impression of built form. The proposed fallback schemes in combination with each other, still allow the original building to be read as it was originally built with limited height increase. Whereby the appeal proposal is fundamentally different and subsumes the original building and creates a wholly different two storey building of some noticeable substance. Consequently, I am not convinced that the two schemes are sufficiently similar to be able to give the fallback positions more than moderate weight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. The proposal would be inappropriate development. It would also reduce the Green Belt's openness. As per the Framework, and directed by the development plan, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. The other matters I have considered above, and as I have explained, would not be sufficient to clearly outweigh the harms I have found. Such that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposed development do not exist.
15. For the reasons given above the appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan and I have been given no compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate therefrom. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR