
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2025

by **L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/25/3359229

5 Spade Oak Farm, The Ostlers, Coldmoorholme Lane, Bourne End SL8 5PS

- 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 Tim George against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council
 - The application Ref is 24/07504/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of garden store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - 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 necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Policy CP8 of the Wycombe District Local Plan 2019 (LP) states that the Council will, among other things, protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
4. Paragraph 154 of the Framework sets out that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, other than in a few exceptions. One exception, at Paragraph 154c) is 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.
5. While the Framework does not define what might be considered a disproportionate addition, Policy DM43 of the LP sets out the local approach for the determination of

decisions relating to the erection of outbuildings serving dwellings within the Green Belt. The policy states that outside built-up villages in the Green Belt, any increase in the volume of residential outbuildings will only be considered as appropriate when they meet all of the criteria provided. This includes that the total volume of all existing and proposed outbuildings on the property would not exceed 140 cubic metres.

6. The Framework does not prohibit local development plan policies being prescriptive in defining what is disproportionate. Therefore, Policy DM43 of the LP is consistent with the Framework.
7. There is an existing outbuilding on the site. The evidence before me indicates that the existing outbuilding is already in excess of 140m³. The evidence indicates that the proposed outbuilding would be approximately 29.8m³, and whilst only a small increase, this would nevertheless result in a combined volume which further exceeds the 140m³ permitted.
8. When taking into consideration the existing outbuilding the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and would consequently be inappropriate development in the Green Belt with regard to paragraph 154c) of the Framework.

Openness

9. The concept of Green Belt openness has both a spatial and visual dimension.
10. The proposed development would be modest in terms of its overall size and would be subordinate to the existing outbuilding and the host property. However, it would introduce built form where none currently exists and would therefore have more of an impact on the openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms than the existing circumstances.
11. The proposal would be partially screened by the existing outbuilding, and whilst it could be viewed from the adjoining paddock, it would be seen against the backdrop of the existing outbuilding. The host property, and mature vegetation along the paddock boundary would screen the proposal from wider public views. As such, its visual effect on openness would be extremely minimal.
12. Overall, whilst there would be no harm to the visual dimension of the openness of the Green Belt, there would be harm to the spatial dimension. The harm would be limited and localised, but would be contrary to the Framework which states that an essential characteristic of Green Belts is their openness.

Other considerations

13. The proposal would contribute to renewable energy infrastructure, with solar panels and battery storage integrated into the structure to generate a significant portion of the site's energy needs from a green source. Paragraph 160 of the Framework states that very special circumstances can include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources. Whilst this would be an environmental benefit, the development would only be likely to generate sufficient electricity to cater for the appeal property. Accordingly, any wider environmental benefits would be limited. I therefore attach moderate weight to this consideration.

14. The proposal would provide additional space for gardening equipment and would allow easier access into the garden and paddock with machinery. It would also help ensure that equipment was not stored loosely in the adjoining paddock. This consideration is a benefit of the proposal to which I afford moderate weight.
15. An application for a greenhouse was approved by the Council at a neighbouring property.¹ Whilst consistency in decision-making is important, I note from the Officer's report that in that instance the cumulative measurements of the greenhouse and other outbuildings was measured as being less than 140m³. It was therefore considered to accord with LP Policy DM43 and not viewed as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This does not tally with the figures highlighted by the appellant, but I do not have all the facts of that application before me, and I must determine this appeal on its own merits. I therefore afford this consideration limited weight.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

16. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. It would also lead to a small loss of openness to the Green Belt. The other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. As such, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The development would thus conflict with the Green Belt protection aims of the Framework and Policies CP8 and DM43 of the LP.
17. The proposal would conflict with national policy and with the development plan when considered as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
18. As a result, the appeal should be dismissed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR

¹ 22/07236/FUL