
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2025

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/25/3364239

56 West End, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire CB22 4LX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Paul Leivers against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 24/04604/HFUL, dated 9 December 2024, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2025.
 - The development proposed is a part single storey, part two storey side and rear extension following demolition of existing lean to, single storey front and side extension and alterations to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development plan policy;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene; and
 - If the proposal would be inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The site lies within the Cambridge Green Belt as defined by Policy S/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 (the SCLP) so the first issue is whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In relation to NPPF paragraph 154(c) and SCLP Policy H/13, the appellant argues that the proposed extensions are not disproportionate having regard to the size of the plot concerned. However, the criterion relates to disproportionate additions in relation to the size of the original *building*, not the plot. According

to the Council the proposal would more than double the footprint of the building and the majority of the extensions would be two-storey. The floorspace would increase from about 32 sq m to about 80 sq m. The proposal thus amounts to a disproportionate addition to the original building and consequently would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This would, by definition, be harmful.

Openness

4. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and can essentially be regarded as the presence or otherwise of built form. For the reasons set out in the previous paragraph the proposal would result in a significant increase in the volume of the building and a commensurate decrease in the openness of the Green Belt. This would result in a further element of harm to the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

5. No 56 comprises one of a pair of semi-detached houses with No 54. Whilst the single storey lean-to at each end differs slightly, the pair are essentially symmetrical and form a pleasant if unremarkable part of the street scene. However, the two-storey extension would almost double the width of the front elevation with the same eaves and ridge heights, thus obscuring the form of the original dwelling and visually unbalancing the pair of semi-detached houses. Unlike an earlier permission¹, the extension would not be stepped back with a lower ridge height as a way of showing suitable subservience and respect to the original design.
6. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host building and thus the street scene in conflict with SCLP Policy HQ/1. This requires development to be of high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to the local area.

Other considerations

7. The proposal would provide much improved accommodation for the appellant but no other considerations are put forward and this factor can only be given limited weight.

Conclusion

8. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is by definition harmful; it would also adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF prescribes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and in addition the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building and street scene. In support of the scheme the other considerations can only be given limited weight. Consequently, in this case other considerations do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm that has been identified, which is the relevant test in paragraph 153 of the NPPF. Therefore, very special circumstances do not exist to justify the proposal and the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

¹ Ref 22/05216/HFUL