



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2025

by **David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/25/3365020

Broadhaven, Old Beech Farm, Woolley, Wakefield WF4 2FS

- 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 Lee Cooper against the decision of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01762/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 1 no building for the storage of equipment to maintain paddock.
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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, with due regard to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it; and
 - Would any harm by reason of inappropriateness be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Green Belt

3. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. This includes the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation (amongst other things) as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
4. The appeal site was part of a wider area of land used for equestrian purposes. The appellant sets out that the plot of land in which the proposed building would be located was purchased and fenced off from the remainder of the equestrian land in order to provide a buffer between the appellant's property and the third party equestrian use; and to ensure the maintenance of privacy and views over the land from the appellant's dwelling which is adjacent to the paddock. Based on the evidence before me, the paddock which the building would serve is no longer used for equestrian purposes.

5. However, the appellant contends that the use of the paddock would represent outdoor recreation through the tending of the land and its long term maintenance, the planting of trees and the general enjoyment of the open space.
6. There is no definition of 'outdoor recreation' within the Framework, and this is a broad term which could cover a wide range of outdoor activities. However, I am not persuaded the activities referred to by the appellant would fall within that definition. The enjoyment of open space could relate to much of the Green Belt, and given that the land is privately owned for the benefit of the appellant I do not consider that this would represent outdoor recreation for the purposes of the Framework. The maintenance of the site is an operational necessity rather than a recreational activity in itself; and given that I have concluded that the private enjoyment of the land as open space does not represent outdoor recreation within the terms of paragraph 154(b) this maintenance is not in association with an outdoor recreation use. The planting of trees is similarly a maintenance or enhancement activity of the land rather than being for recreation, and in any event the submitted plans only refer to the planting of a screening hedge.
7. The appellant refers to similarities with gardening and tending allotments. However, gardening is a domestic activity which would be associated with the curtilage of a dwelling rather than a paddock such as the appeal site. Allotments are also of materially different use compared to the maintenance of a paddock.
8. I therefore conclude that the paddock does not fall within the uses set out in paragraph 154(b) of the Framework.
9. However, even if I were to conclude that the exception of paragraph 154(b) could apply, then the effect on the openness and the purposes of the Green Belt should also be considered. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt that has spatial as well as visual aspects. Spatially, the proposal would introduce built development onto part of the site where no such development exists, with a commensurate effect on openness. Visually, the proposed building would be located some distance away from other buildings with the resultant visual impact of a freestanding building encroaching onto open land, thereby conflicting with the Green Belt purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. There is a public footpath adjacent to the paddock and the building would be readily visible from this. The proposed hedging would do little to mitigate for the introduction of this new building on open land.
10. Drawing the above together, I have concluded that the proposal would not relate to a use falling within paragraph 154(b) of the Framework. However, even if it would fall within the scope of paragraph 154(b), it would fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with a purpose of including land within it. The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Other Considerations

11. The appellant refers to the fallback position of storing maintenance equipment in the open, which they consider would be detrimental to heritage assets including the Woolley Conservation Area (CA). However, the maintenance equipment would be moveable and temporary features. Although the equipment may be of a functional appearance, viewed objectively and in context the equipment would not be unduly incongruous in views of the area. The prevention of any harm arising from the

outdoor storage of equipment, including in respect of the CA, therefore carries limited weight as a benefit of the proposal.

12. Furthermore, although the appellant refers to the alternatives of storing the equipment on site or some distance away at their place of work, it has not been demonstrated that a building of a similar scale and function cannot be provided within the curtilage of the appellant's dwelling. Although such a building may not currently exist, this does not mean that it cannot be provided. A garden room has recently been granted planning permission at the dwelling which indicates that outbuildings within the curtilage may be acceptable. On that basis, the lack of an existing storage building carries little weight in favour of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and that substantial weight should be given to any harm. There are no other considerations of such weight that would outweigh that harm. Very special circumstances to justify the proposal do not therefore exist. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy SP3 of the Wakefield District Local Plan 2024 with regard to the location of the development in the Green Belt. The proposal would also be contrary to the Framework in respect of protecting Green Belt land.
14. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR