



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2025

by **K Winnard LL.B Hons Solicitor**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/D/25/3365095

Springfield Farm, Boundary Meanygate, Hesketh Bank, Lancashire PR4 6AL

- 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 and Mrs Paul and Philippa Aberdeen against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/0951/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the single storey extension to rear of existing detached bungalow.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the appeal are:
 - i. Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - ii. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - iii. Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal property, Springfield Farm, (Springfield Farm) lies within the Green Belt. The Framework states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate development within the Green Belt unless the development falls within specified exceptions. These include the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Framework defines original building as the property as it existed on 1 July 1948 or if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.¹ the building as existed in 1948. The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Policy GN1 broadly aligns with the Framework in this regard and the Council's Supplementary Planning

¹ Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework

Document Development in the Green Belt (SPD) quantifies matters further recommending no more than an increase in volume of 40% of the original building.

4. The Framework itself does not detail what a disproportionate addition means, nor does it specify volumetric or other standards, or that comparisons are to be made with reference to the size and scale of the existing layout. Rather, it is an objective test which could include, amongst other things, the floor area, volume and form of the relevant building.
5. Springfield Farm has been previously extended. It is accepted by the appellants that the proposed volume increase would be significantly greater than what the Council would normally accept and acknowledged that the proposed extension would amount to a disproportionate addition to the original building. I concur with the assessment of both parties given that the proposed extension would be deeper and wider and would have a significantly greater volume and height compared to the original building.
6. In the context of previous extensions to the property, the cumulative effect of the appeal proposal would amount to a disproportionate addition to the original building. The appellants' statement also contends that the site is previously developed land (PDL). I note the wording of footnote 55 within the Framework however this needs to be read alongside the requirement that development should not be inappropriate. Paragraph 154(g) of the Framework refers to the limited infilling or partial or full redevelopment of PDL. However, even if I were to conclude that the appeal site comprises PDL, the development does not have the character of "infilling". The proposal could not be considered to be the infilling of a gap between buildings, nor would it constitute partial or complete redevelopment of the land. Consequently, when considered as a whole, the proposal would not amount to redevelopment or infill of PDL within the scope of paragraph 154(g).
7. I therefore conclude that the proposal would amount to inappropriate development within the Green Belt and so would not comply with the Framework. As a consequence, it would not comply with Local Plan Policy GN1. Nor would it comply with the SPD due to the disproportionate size of the proposal.

Openness

8. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are their openness and spatial permanence. The openness of the Green Belt has a spatial and visual aspect and is primarily characterised by a lack of buildings or development. The bulk of the extension, as proposed, would replace the lean-to outrigger but there would be a further addition to the footprint of the building and an increase in mass over the size of the existing outrigger. To that extent the proposal would inevitably have some effect on the openness of the Green Belt through the increase of the amount of built form.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the development would not preserve Green Belt openness, albeit in the context of the scale of the proposal, its location at the rear of the dwelling and the development that exists currently on site, this would be limited.

Other Considerations

10. The existing lean-to outrigger extension is of poor design and in need of repair. Its design would be consistent with the building's existing form, and I note that the Council does not object to the style and design of the extension. Whilst it is not particularly visible in public views, the removal of the outrigger extension is nonetheless a positive material consideration to weigh in the balance. The proposal would also provide enlarged living accommodation for the family, including in energy efficiency and layout terms and as all of these considerations each attract modest weight in favour of the appeal proposal.
11. I have been referred to the position that a similarly sized extension could be built under permitted development rights which would not be visually as satisfactory. However, any such extension would be of a necessarily lower height and scale to that before me. As a fallback position, it does not justify the proposal.
12. I note too that the proposal would be not unacceptable with regard to the living conditions of neighbours, ecology and highway safety. These do not weigh either for or against the proposal. Similarly, the proposed extension would be constructed in matching materials and is in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. However, aspects of good design are fundamental to any development proposal and as such are neutral considerations.
13. I have considered the appeal decision² brought to my attention by the appellant in which an Inspector found that significant weight could be given to the existence of the previous approvals on site and the form of a new extension. A different conclusion was reached on what is a matter of judgment dependent on the bespoke site and specific context of each case and its area. I am satisfied that the site circumstances are sufficiently different so as to not alter my view in this case.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

14. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt and further harm would arise as to openness. The Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm arising from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
15. I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. Thus, overall the proposal would conflict with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and there are no material considerations to outweigh this consideration.
16. Accordingly for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR

² APP/J1915/D/22/3295821