



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/25/3367367

1 The Yard, Hill Farm, Hamlet Hill, Roydon, Harlow CM19 5LD

- 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 Reddington against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/0628/25.
 - The development proposed is 'conversion and extension of existing cartlodge to form annex, office/gym and garden store'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for 'conversion and extension of existing cartlodge to form annex, office/gym and garden store' at 1 The Yard, Hill Farm, Hamlet Hill, Roydon, Harlow CM19 5LD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref EPF/0628/25, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2160/24/01 and 2160/24/02 Rev B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used at any time other than as part of or for any purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling known as 1 The Yard.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - i) whether or not the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - ii) the effect of the proposal on the setting and significance of the Grade II listed building, 'Hill Farmhouse'; and
 - iii) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including with regard to the location of the site within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area.

Reasons

Whether Inappropriate Development

3. The appeal proposes alterations and extensions to a cartlodge structure which is positioned to the side of a driveway and turning area in front of 1 The Yard.
4. The site is within the Green Belt where the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') provides that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework identifies that development is inappropriate unless one of a list of exceptions applies. Of these, the main parties refer to the exception at paragraph 154 c) which 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. Policy DM4 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 Part One, adopted 2023 ('the LP') includes similar provisions.
5. The proposal would result in a significant increase in the size of the existing cartlodge structure. Nevertheless, the appellant refers to caselaw which has established that an extension for the purposes of the exception at what is now paragraph 154 c) of the Framework can include structures which are physically detached. In this case, I am satisfied as a matter of fact and degree that the proposal would comprise a normal domestic adjunct and that there would be a close physical relationship with 1 The Yard such that it would amount to an extension to this dwelling. The Council has not argued differently. Indeed, its report refers to the proposal as an addition to the main house, and only presents figures for the floor area of the original dwelling alongside the proposed extensions. Accordingly, I consider it appropriate to assess whether the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the dwelling as the 'original building'.
6. The figures quoted by the Council suggest that the proposal would result in an increase of floor area of less than 3% over the original dwelling. This would be a very limited enlargement. Moreover, the dwelling is a large two-storey structure with front and rear gable projections which add considerable bulk and mass. As proposed, the maximum width and depth of the extended outbuilding would each be less than the comparable dimensions of the dwelling. The extensions would also be of lesser height than the existing cartlodge which is itself a single-storey structure of limited height in comparison to the dwelling. Neither party has presented figures or calculations beyond the floor area details in the Council's report, but in my assessment, the cumulative scale, bulk and mass of the structure would amount to a modest addition relative to the large overall size of the dwelling.
7. I appreciate that the development would sit forward of the dwelling and that there would be a greater visual presence of built form on this part of the site. Even so, it would be appreciated against and together with the much larger bulk and mass of the dwelling with which it would share a close visual and functional relationship. In this context, I find that the proposal would result in a comparatively understated structure which would be subservient and clearly subordinate to the host dwelling.
8. Neither the Framework nor LP Policy DM4 define 'disproportionate additions', and I have not been directed to any other relevant local guidance on this point. For the reasons above however, I find that the development in this case would not result in

disproportionate additions over and above the size of the appeal dwelling as the 'original building'.

9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would comprise an exception to inappropriate development and would comply with the terms of the Framework and Policy DM4 of the LP.
10. The Council has additionally referred to harm to the openness of the Green Belt in both spatial and visual terms and conflict with the Green Belt aim of preventing urban sprawl. As an exception to inappropriate development however, the proposal should not be regarded as harmful to the openness or purposes of Green Belt.

Listed Building

11. The appeal site is to the rear of Hill Farmhouse which is a Grade II listed building. I have therefore considered the proposal in accordance with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') which requires special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their setting.
12. Hill Farmhouse is a two-storey timber-framed building with a hipped, plain tile roof and weatherboard exterior which sits on a wide plot along Hamlet Hill. Based on my observations and the information before me, I consider the significance of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the architectural and historic interest of its built form and fabric as a late 17th Century farmhouse.
13. The building also derives some significance from its setting, most closely from its relationships with Hamlet Hill and the relatively large domestic garden and associated outbuildings on its plot. I have no firm information identifying functional connection(s) with fields which surround much of the development on this part of Hamlet Hill, but they nevertheless provide for an attractive rural setting which reflects the historic role and context of the building. That said, the listed building is now set apart from agricultural land in the wider vicinity by intervening development which has effectively interrupted any direct connection.
14. This development includes the appeal dwelling and the neighbouring property at 2 The Yard. These sites accommodate modern dwellings with associated access, parking, outbuildings and gardens, and are clearly appreciated as separate residential plots. While they maintain a reasonable degree of spaciousness, their form and layout nevertheless provides for a somewhat suburban quality to the area behind the rear boundary of the listed building. Notwithstanding any former relationship that it may have had, I consider that beyond providing opportunities for views towards the rear of the listed building, the appeal site now makes little meaningful contribution to the significance of Hill Farmhouse as part of its setting.
15. The proposal would increase the scale of built form to the front of the appeal dwelling, and it would extend closer to the rear boundary of Hill Farmhouse than the existing cartlodge. However, the development would remain clearly set apart from the listed building with the shared access driveway for 1 and 2 The Yard providing both physical and functional separation, and it would not block the rear of the building from view. Given also its position and modest single-storey height, I am satisfied that it would not compete with the listed building nor erode its prominence.

16. The development would inevitably result in some reduction in openness on this part of the site, but it would in my view be plainly appreciated as an addition within the context of the modern infill development to the rear of Hill Farmhouse. Furthermore, I have found above that the development would be subservient and clearly subordinate to the host dwelling and I see no reason that the appearance of the development or the external materials would in themselves be unsympathetic. In my assessment, these characteristics would result in a discreet and unobtrusive addition which would not tangibly exacerbate the existing impression of urbanisation on the appeal site or cause harmful encroachment to the existing setting of the listed building.
17. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal would preserve the setting and significance of the Grade II listed building, 'Hill Farmhouse'. This would satisfy the requirements of section 66(1) of the Act, as well as the Framework insofar as it seeks the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets. I also find no conflict with Policy DM7 of the LP which includes requirements broadly seeking development that preserves or enhances heritage assets and their setting.

Character and Appearance

18. The appeal site is located within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area ('the CA') which covers an extensive area taking in a number of historic settlements together with surrounding countryside. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, I have no firm reason to disagree with the Council's view that the significance of the CA is primarily derived from the well-preserved medieval settlement patterns and the 'closed field' systems which are key landscape features contributing to the character and appearance of the area. Along with the open or common field systems, this creates a distinctive setting for each settlement.
19. However, the modern, infill development at The Yard which includes the appeal dwelling has altered the pattern of development in this part of the CA from the layout shown on the CA boundary map. The generous grounds provide for spaciousness around the appeal dwelling in keeping with the wider rural surroundings, but the presence of residential development and the position of the site sitting between neighbouring plots means that the appeal site is now appreciated and understood as part of the settlement on Hamlet Hill.
20. Noting the position of the development sitting between the appeal dwelling and Hamlet Hill, it would similarly be appreciated and understood as part of the settlement rather than the wider agricultural landscape. In this position and noting my findings above that the development would be subservient and clearly subordinate to the host dwelling and closely related to it, there would not be further harmful disruption of remaining historic settlement or field patterns in this part of the CA.
21. In addition, I have found that the proposal would result in a discreet and unobtrusive addition. Although it would cause some reduction in openness on this part of the site, the effect would be very slight relative to the generous grounds. I am satisfied that the spacious quality of the site would not be diminished to any meaningful degree, and that there would not be a tangible increase in the impression of urbanisation on the site.
22. Moreover, the development would be likely to be screened to public views from Hamlet Hill by existing intervening development, and while there may be glimpses

from public rights of way to the south, these would be at some distance. I cannot therefore agree with the Council that the development would be prominent. Instead, I consider that the visual impact would be very limited and while there would be views from nearby properties, I find given the above factors that the proposal would be suitably sympathetic to its surroundings. It would not detract from the distinctive setting of the settlement and there would not be harm to the character or the appearance of the site, the CA or the Hamlet Hill street scene.

23. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and that it would preserve the character, appearance and significance of the Nazeing and South Roydon CA in accordance with section 72(1) of the Act and the Framework. It would also accord with requirements within Policies DM7 and DM9 of the LP broadly seeking high quality design which relates positively to its context and local character and the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets.

Other Considerations

24. The appellants indicate that the proposal is in part intended to provide space for a family member with medical needs. While I have therefore had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in s149 of the Equality Act 2010, it is not necessary for me to consider the specific need for the proposal further given my findings on the main issues which indicate that the appeal should in any event be allowed.

Conditions

25. I have imposed the standard time limit condition, and a condition specifying the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty. A condition to require the use of matching materials is necessary to safeguard heritage assets and the character and appearance of the area.
26. The Council additionally suggested a condition to require that the development is occupied for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling and not used for any primary residential accommodation. I consider a condition to restrict the use of the development would be necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area and living conditions of surrounding occupiers amongst other matters. However, the proposal includes an office/gym space, and living and sleeping space which is proposed for use by a family member as part of the residential use of the dwelling. It also includes a garden store which would serve a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling. I have therefore amended the wording of the suggested condition to reflect the nature of the development applied for.

Conclusion

27. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would accord with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached.
28. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR