



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2025

by **C Housden BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/25/3361630

4 Elvin Drive, North Stifford, Grays, Thurrock RM16 5UT

- 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 Volodymyr Ukrainets against the decision of Thurrock Council.
 - The application ref is 24/01042/HHA.
 - The development proposed is construction of rear conservatory and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appellant has requested in the event the proposed front porch is found to be unacceptable but the rear conservatory is acceptable, that consideration is given to issuing a split decision. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the front porch on the character and appearance of the host property and area; and
 - if the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, 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 required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. No 4 Elvin Drive (No 4) is situated within the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 153 identifies that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful

to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

5. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless an exception applies. Exception c) of paragraph 154 sets out that one of these exceptions relates to 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.
6. Policy PMD6 of the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (2015) (CSPMD) sets out the Council will maintain, protect and enhance the open character of the Green Belt in accordance with the provisions of the Framework. Alongside this, the policy also provides some additional criteria to apply to various types of development in the Green Belt. In relation to extensions, criteria 1 part i) sets out extensions must not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy PMD6 of the CSPMD is therefore in general conformity with the Framework.
7. The Framework does not provide a definition of what a disproportionate addition would be. However, Policy PMD6 sets out that in the case of a residential extension, proportionate extensions would be no larger than two reasonably sized rooms or any equivalent amount.
8. According to the Council, the original property comprised 7 rooms and was around 82m² of floor space. The Council considers that in this context two reasonably sized rooms would be the equivalent to a 23.4m² extension. Whilst, it has not been demonstrated how this figure has been calculated, this does seem to be a fair figure for two reasonably sized rooms for the appeal property.
9. In any case, whether a development is disproportionate is dependent on the individual circumstances and context of a development, taking into account factors like footprint, floorspace, volume, mass and bulk. Therefore, the two room or equivalent test is a helpful tool, but not determinative.
10. The dwelling has already been subject to a rear and partial side extension. The evidence shows the floor area for this extension was 22.9m², just under the size for two reasonably sized rooms.
11. In the context of the property already having been extended from its original state, the extensions cumulatively would increase the floor space of the dwelling by nearly 50%. The proposal would add additional scale, bulk and mass which would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
12. Even considering just the proposed rear extension, owing to its bulk, scale and mass in combination with the previous additions it would still result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
13. As such, the appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt under Policy PMD6 and the Framework which is, by definition, harmful.

Openness

14. The Planning Practice Guidance identifies various factors which can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt¹.
15. The appeal property is set within a residential area with a suburban character and appearance, although views of open land beyond the immediate residential area are possible from Elvin Drive.
16. The main bulk and mass of the additions to the property would be situated to the rear with very limited public views. As such, whilst the porch would be visible from the street there would not be a materially harmful effect on openness from a visual perspective as a result of the proposal.
17. In spatial terms, the increased footprint and volume of the building would cause a loss of openness. Given the scale of the additions, as individual components of the development and together, the harm to the openness of the Green Belt would be limited. It would nevertheless be contrary to the objectives of the Framework of keeping land permanently open.

Character and appearance

18. Elvin Drive and the wider residential area comprises predominantly two storey properties which are detached, semi-detached or situated within short terraces. The architectural styles of the properties are consistent, however detailing in the brick work and cladding provides variety within the streetscene.
19. The appeal property is set back from the road and comprises a semi-detached two storey property with a projecting double bay window. Some properties in the area, including No 4, have a small overhang porch above the front door. However, protruding porches with enclosed sides do not feature as part of the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
20. The porch would be set back from the front boundary of the site, use matching materials and would appear secondary to the host property. However, the presence of such a porch would appear as a highly incongruous feature within the streetscene which would be distinctly out of character with the design of the host property and other properties within the area.
21. The development would therefore result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and area. The development would therefore conflict with Policies PMD2, CSTP22 and CSTP23 of the CSPMD. These policies, amongst other matters seek to ensure development is of a high quality design that responds to the sensitivity of the site and character of the area.

Other Considerations

22. The proposal would improve the living conditions of occupiers of No 4 by providing additional floor space. However, this is a personal benefit of the scheme and it attracts limited weight in favour of the proposal.

¹ Reference ID: 64-001-20190722

Green Belt Balance

23. The proposal would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would result in limited harm to openness. Paragraph 153 of the Framework sets out that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. The proposed porch would also result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and area.
24. There are no other considerations in favour of either the entire proposal or just the rear extension which clearly outweigh the harm I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
25. Given these findings, a split decision for just the rear extension would not overcome my concerns.

Conclusion

26. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Housden

INSPECTOR