



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2025

by **G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/25/3365418

Four Acres, Staircase Lane, Coventry CV5 9DP

- 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 Simon Rotheram against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/0000321/HHA.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing porch and rear dormers, to be replaced with an improved rear dormer and improved full height front entrance gable.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues relevant to this appeal are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and relevant development plan policies
 - the effect of the proposal upon the openness of the Green Belt
 - the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area; and
 - 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

3. The appeal property is located within the Green Belt and Policy GB1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan (LP) states that development proposals in the Green Belt will be assessed in relation to the relevant national planning policy. Paragraph 154 of the Framework identifies that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of a number of exceptions applies. Paragraph 154c) of the Framework identifies that extensions or alterations of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building would be not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

4. Based on the planning history for the dwelling, several extensions have been approved, though I do not have a detailed breakdown of what has been built. However, the Council identify that the original building had a floor area of approximately 100 square metres (sqm) and that the development that has already taken place, alongside what is proposed, the extensions and alterations to the building would result in around 108 sqm of additional floor area. The appellant does not dispute these figures. This would effectively double the original floor area of the dwelling.
5. Based on the information before me it would appear that the additions to the dwelling have widened and increased the depth of it. Whilst the proposal would involve the removal of the existing porch and would only amount to a small addition of actual floor area, the front entrance gable would extend out from the front elevation at a two-storey level and would involve a considerable addition to the roof, extending out from the front of the house. Although the front entrance gable would be seen against the dwelling, it would appear prominent, particularly at roof level, when viewed from Staircase Lane. This would increase the bulk of the dwelling across two-storeys in a prominent location at the front of the building.
6. The proposed dormer windows would replace the existing dormer windows within the rear roof slope, and these would only be modestly larger than existing. The rear elevation of the dwelling is relatively well screened by the house itself and the attached neighbouring property. The proposed dormer windows would be modestly sized additions to the original building.
7. Taking into consideration the size of the original building, when viewed cumulatively, the as built and proposed extensions would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
8. Even if I were to consider this to be Grey Belt land, as defined in the Framework, there is no substantive evidence to suggest there is a demonstrable unmet need for the development.
9. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would not accord with paragraph 154c) of the Framework and would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

10. The appeal property is a dormer bungalow with dormer windows within the rear roof slope. The proposal would replace an existing single storey porch and relocate it more centrally within the front elevation of the dwelling. The proposed two-storey front entrance gable would project from the front roof slope with a pitched roof extending beyond the front elevation of the dwelling.
11. The proposed front entrance gable would only extend a short distance from the front elevation of the house and as such, from a spatial perspective the proposed front entrance gable would only introduce a modest amount of new built form. However, given that the proposal would be over two-storeys and extend perpendicular to the roof of the house, the proposal would significantly increase the apparent bulk of the dwelling. Given that the existing porch to be removed is smaller in scale, the proposal would create a more visually imposing dwelling within the Green Belt and would diminish the more open aspect and views at roof level when the building was viewed from the side. The effect would be relatively

modest and localised, but there would be an adverse visual impact on openness of this part of the Green Belt.

12. The proposed replacement dormer windows would be modest additions to the rear roof slope. These would be situated within the roof slope and from a spatial perspective they would not result in notable additional built form in the Green Belt. As a result, they would not harm the spatial aspect of the openness of the Green Belt. Given the location of the dormer windows, they would be mostly screened by the house itself and given that these would be within the existing roof slope, they would not substantially increase the apparent bulk of the dwelling from a visual perspective.
13. It is not disputed between the parties that the development would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and based on the information before me I find no reason to conclude otherwise. However, whilst the proposal would not necessarily harm the spatial aspect of the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal would harm the visual openness of it.

Character and Appearance

14. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling and whilst it has been extended the two dwellings remain similarly designed and each have a single storey porch that is similar in design and location. The symmetry and balance in the scale and appearance of the two dwellings makes a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of each dwelling as well as how the dwellings are viewed in the street scene.
15. The proposed front entrance gable would be relocated to be more centrally located within the appeal property and as a result, the porch would no longer be sited in the same comparative location as that within the neighbouring dwelling. Furthermore, the front entrance gable would be a substantial addition across two-storeys to the front of the dwelling and would be considerably larger than the existing porch as well as that within the attached dwelling. Consequently, the appeal property would be substantially altered and this substantial change to the front elevation would undermine the symmetry and balance of the appearance of the semi-detached dwellings. The proposed front entrance gable would be more centrally located within the dwelling which may create balance within the property itself, however, for the reasons given above, this would harm the positive contribution the shared design of the two dwellings makes towards the character and appearance of each other and the street scene.
16. The proposed replacement dormer windows would be located within the rear roof slope and would not extend above it. As such, these would generally be screened by the house and would not unbalance the symmetry of the two dwellings. Additionally, these would replace existing dormer windows and thus would not appear out of character within the dwelling.
17. Therefore, whilst the proposed dormer windows would not be harmful, the proposed development, when viewed as a whole, would harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the development would conflict with Policy DE1 of the LP. This expects developments, amongst other matters, to respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.

Other Considerations

18. The appellant has identified that it would be possible, using the dwellings permitted development rights, to extend the dwelling to the rear. This would be a single storey addition and based on the information before me there is a reasonable prospect that the fallback development may take place. The appellant states that they would be amenable to a condition that would restrict the use of the dwellings permitted development rights to undertake this extension in the event the appeal was allowed. However, such a condition would only come into force once the development commences, and it would be possible for the appellant to erect the rear extension before the development proposed has commenced. As a result, the appellant could undertake both developments given that they are on opposite sides of the dwelling.
19. Furthermore, this fallback scheme would be a single storey addition to the rear of the dwelling and whilst the floor area could be larger than what is proposed, the two developments are not necessarily comparable with a single storey development to the rear likely having a less harmful effect upon the visual aspect of the openness of the Green Belt, compared to the two-storey front addition. Consequently, the proposed development would likely have a more harmful effect on the openness of the Green Belt than the fallback scheme. Furthermore, the single storey rear extension would generally be screened by the house itself and be modest in height. Given the identified concerns about the proposed front entrance gable, the fallback scheme would be less harmful to the area's character and appearance than the proposed development. Accordingly, I attribute very limited weight to this consideration.
20. The proposed development would provide additional living space for the appellant and their family to meet their changing needs. To this I attribute limited weight in favour of the scheme given the limited scale of the proposal.
21. Whilst the scheme is not identified as causing harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers or highway safety, amongst other matters, a lack of harm in these respects weighs neither for nor against the development.
22. For the reasons given above, the design of the proposed development would be harmful and thus it is not evident that this is the most reasonable way of extending the property, nor that permitted development extensions would necessarily be less attractive than that proposed. As such, the design of the scheme does not weigh in favour of it.

Green Belt and Planning Balance

23. The proposal would be inappropriate development which the Framework identifies is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and which should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It would also cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt in visual terms, albeit modest and localised. The Framework sets out that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and thus substantial weight is attributed to the identified harm in this instance.
24. Against this harm, for the reasons given above, I attribute limited weight to the other considerations. Even cumulatively I find that the weight of the other considerations would not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified so as to

amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development in the Green Belt.

25. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the Framework. It would also be contrary to Policy GB1 of the LP which indicates that national Green Belt policy will be applied.
26. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with it.

Conclusion

27. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

INSPECTOR