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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2025

by **P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/25/3368158**

**The Willows, Common Mead Lane, Hambrook, South Gloucestershire BS16 1QQ**

- 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 M Rahman against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
  - The application Ref is P25/00455/HH.
  - The development proposed is first floor extension over garage to provide additional living accommodation.
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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 having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
  - the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt; and
  - if the proposal is inappropriate development, whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm so as to amount to very special circumstances.

### Reasons

#### *Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt*

3. The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless specified exceptions apply. This includes, at paragraph 154 c), 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.
4. The Council has not referred to any development plan policies in its reason for refusal. However, it has referenced Policy PSP7 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Policies, Sites and Places Plan (PSPP) within the officer report, which broadly reflects national Green Belt policy and as such there is consistency with the Framework.

5. Whilst the Framework does not provide a definition of 'disproportionate additions', PSPP Policy PSP7 provides more detailed policy guidance. It identifies that, as a general guide, an addition resulting in a volume increase up to 30% of the original building would be likely to be proportionate. Moreover, additions that exceed 30% will be carefully assessed and increases of 50% or more would most likely be considered to be disproportionate additions and be refused as inappropriate development.
6. The Willows is a previously extended detached 2 storey property set within spacious verdant grounds, with established trees along its boundaries, and most noticeably to the adjacent junction between the M32 and Filton Road. To the south is a large, detached house set within a generous plot, with a golf driving range to the west, including tall nets to prevent stray balls leaving the range.
7. It is noted that the precise metrics of the previous extensions at the appeal property are in dispute and neither party have substantively evidenced their position. Nevertheless, exceedance of the 50% guideline appears to be a matter of common ground.
8. Such quantitative measurements are useful to assess whether extensions amount to a disproportionate addition to an original building. However, their scale, bulk, massing and height are also relevant to such an assessment. In this respect, whilst the footprint of the house would not be increased, the proposal would noticeably increase its volume and significantly extend the width of the house at first floor level. Consequently, taking the previous and proposed extensions together, the proposal would create a substantially larger house and would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling.
9. The appellant has made reference to the grey belt exception. Even if I were to accept that the appeal site does not strongly contribute to the purpose of the Green Belt relating to unrestricted sprawl, the merging of towns or the setting of historic towns, in order for development not to be regarded as inappropriate, Paragraph 155 of the Framework refers to the use of grey belt satisfying a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. There is no compelling evidence before me to indicate that this is applicable in this appeal and therefore, this paragraph does not render the development not inappropriate.
10. For these reasons, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is, by definition, harmful. It would therefore conflict with PSPP Policy PSP7 and the associated policies of the Framework.

### *Openness*

11. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt that has spatial as well as visual aspects. There are glimpses of The Willows through the established trees along Filton Road, and despite the presence of other houses and development in the vicinity of the appeal site, the openness of the Green Belt is clearly evident around the property and the wider area.
12. The proposed development would increase the scale, bulk and massing, as well as its height above the existing garage, of The Willows. This would result in a limited harmful loss of openness that weighs against the proposal.

### *Other considerations*

13. It is contended that the proposal is subservient, and I note that the proposal was not refused by the Council on design grounds. From the evidence before me I see no reason to disagree with the Council's position and this is a neutral factor in my determination, neither weighing for nor against the proposal.
14. My attention has been drawn to an approval granted nearby in the Green Belt by the Council. However, this development for 4 houses is materially different to the domestic extension proposal before me. As such a comparison is of limited relevance in this instance, and I have considered the appeal before me on its individual merits.

### **Conclusion**

15. In summary, the proposal would be inappropriate development in the terms set out by the Framework and would result in a limited harmful loss of openness to the Green Belt. The Framework requires that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
16. For the reasons set out above, the harm to the Green Belt would not be clearly outweighed by other considerations and, therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify a grant of planning permission have not been demonstrated. Consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

*P Barton*

INSPECTOR