



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2025 by N Manley BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/25/3366146

4 Mansion House Drive, Harrow HA7 3GA

- 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 Ruparelia against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref is PL/2970/24.
 - The development proposed is described as a "First floor front extensions & single storey rear infill extension & two storey rear/side & single storey infill extension to main house and granny annexe & rear extension to granny annexe inc. dormers to rear slope & internal alterations for wheelchair access to first floor."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The appeal site is within the Green Belt and therefore the main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policies, and the effect it would have on the openness of the Green Belt; 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 for the Recommendation

4. Mansion House Drive (no 4) is a substantial detached dwelling set within a large, open plot on a private gated road within the Grade II registered park and garden known as Bentley Priory. No 4 sits centrally within the site with a detached double garage to the north. The plot is characterised by its openness, with mature trees near the frontage but otherwise expansive lawned areas encompassing the dwelling.

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt and effect on openness

5. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should only be permitted in very special circumstances. It also emphasises that any identified harm to the Green Belt must be given substantial weight. One such exception, outlined in paragraph 154(c), allows for 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 DM16 of the Harrow Development Management Policies (2013) (HDMP) and Policy G2 of The London Plan (adopted 2021) (TLP) are broadly consistent with the aims of the Framework and that proposals for inappropriate redevelopment which would harm the Green belt will be refused in the absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances.
7. The Glossary to the Framework defines the *original building* as the structure as it existed on 1 July 1948, or, if constructed after that date, as it was built originally. From the figures provided by the parties, which are not in dispute, the development would see a 45% footprint increase and a 42% floor area increase above the size of the original building.
8. The proposal would significantly alter the scale and massing at the rear of the property by introducing a two-storey extension with substantial bulk, extending well beyond the depth of the existing northern wing. Additionally, the elongation of the garage with a new flat roof, combined with single-storey elements and a linking extension to the detached garage, would create a structure disproportionate in size, scale, and mass when compared to that of the original dwelling.
9. While I acknowledge the appellant's view that the garage footprint would remain largely unchanged, the proposal would introduce a substantial new built form above and around it, contributing significantly to the overall increase in bulk and floorspace. The cumulative impact of these additions, evident in the marked expansion of footprint, scale and floor area, would amount to an excessive and disproportionate enlargement beyond the size of the original building.
10. Moreover, the increased scale and bulk, combined with the positioning and forward projection of the two-storey element relative to the existing layout, would noticeably extend the built form into previously undeveloped space. Although this impact would be most apparent from the rear, the development as a whole would nonetheless diminish the openness of the Green Belt to a moderate degree, both visually and spatially. This loss of openness contributes to the harm arising from inappropriateness, to which I must attach substantial weight.
11. The appellant has referred to the exception outlined in paragraph 154(g) of the Framework which notably addresses the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (PDL). Annex 2 to the Framework makes clear that land in built-up areas such as residential gardens is excluded from the definition of previously developed land (PDL). As the site lies within a built-up area, it cannot be regarded as PDL for the purposes of national planning policy. Even if the site were to be considered PDL, the proposal would not represent partial or complete redevelopment and, in any event, would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

12. The appellant has suggested that the site lies within Grey Belt land. However, it has not been demonstrated, with reference to the available evidence, that there is a clear unmet need for the type of development proposed, as required by paragraph 155 of the Framework.
13. Overall, the proposal would constitute disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building contrary to paragraph 154 (c) of the Framework and cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to Policy DM16 of the HDMP, Policy G2 of TLP and Policy CS1 F of the Harrow Core Strategy (adopted 2012) (HCS).
14. However, I find no conflict with Policy CS1 B of the HCS, which primarily aims to ensure that development does not harm the character of suburban areas, promoting proposals that respond positively to the local and historic context. Given the context of the existing property and the surrounding built environment, I consider the proposal would respect the character and appearance of both the host property and the wider area.

Other Considerations

15. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
16. The appellant has cited their personal circumstances, including their desire for a functional and sustainable family home with appropriate accommodation for multi-generational living. I also acknowledge the appellant's position that there is a need to provide an internal lift to accommodate an elderly family member and ensure access to both floors. However, I have been provided with limited evidence to demonstrate why such a feature necessitates the overall scale of development proposed. Accordingly, I have given these considerations limited weight.
17. I have also considered the suggestion that the design and scale of the proposal are necessary to support the long-term viability of the dwelling, both in terms of meeting modern living standards and maintaining its architectural integrity. However, no detailed evidence has been presented to demonstrate that these aims would be compromised in the absence of the proposed development. Accordingly, I therefore afford this consideration limited weight.
18. It has also been put to me there is a precedence of similar extensions in the area, which demonstrates comparable developments have been approved. However, in the absence of further details regarding these particular schemes, I am unable to draw any direct comparisons with the development before me. Consequently, this position carries minimal weight in favour of the proposal.
19. The appellant states that the proposal was subject to pre-application discussions and that its scale was reduced in response to those discussions, during which a favourable response was given in principle, subject to the final design. However, pre-application advice is given without prejudice and does not bind the Council in its formal decision-making. As such, it carries little weight in the consideration of this appeal.

20. I have also had regard to the appellant's position that the development would be subordinate to the existing dwelling and would not harm the character and appearance of the area. However, the Council did not refuse the application on grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the host property or wider area. Based on my observations on site, I see no reason to disagree with that assessment. In any case, the absence of harm in this respect is a neutral factor in the overall planning balance and does not weigh either for or against the proposal in relation to the identified harm to the Green Belt.

Whether very special circumstances exist

21. The proposal would cause harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and harm to openness. Paragraph 153 of the Framework specifies that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. For the reasons given above, the other considerations in this case, either individually or cumulatively, do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Consequently, the very special circumstances needed to justify the development do not exist.

Other Matters

22. As noted above, the appeal site lies within the Grade II registered park and garden known as Bentley Priory, a large country estate dating from the sixteenth century which was subsequently enlarged and improved in the late eighteenth century. The Council has not raised any concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development in relation to this designated heritage asset. I am satisfied, based on my own observations, that the proposal relates to an existing residential property and would not compromise the special interest or significance of Bentley Priory. Accordingly, the proposal would preserve the significance of the registered park and garden.

Conclusion and Recommendation

23. The proposal would conflict with Policy DM16 of the HDMP, Policy G2 of TLP, Policy CS1 F of the HCS, and section 13 of the Framework. There are no material considerations to outweigh this finding. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Manley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

24. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR