



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025

by E Catcheside BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/25/3371489

4 Augustine Court, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1JJ

- 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 Ms Christine Sillis against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is EPF/0436/25.
 - The development proposed is two storey side and single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for two storey side and single storey front extension at 4 Augustine Court, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1JJ in accordance with the terms of the application, reference EPF/0436/25, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers: Unnumbered Location Plan, 162/05, 162/06, 162/07, 162/08, 162/09, 162/10, 162/11, and 162/12.
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Preliminary Matter

2. The evidence is inconsistent as to whether or not the site lies within the Green Belt. The parties were invited to provide further evidence on this issue during the course of the appeal, and I have taken the information received into account.

Main Issues

3. 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 and, if so, the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and the Royal Gunpowder Factory Conservation Area (RGFCA); and,
 - if the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, or 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. The Framework states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate, unless it falls within one of the listed exceptions. It also says that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
5. The Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 Policies Map Adopted March 2023 (the Policies Map) shows the site lies very close to but outside of the Green Belt boundary.
6. Each party has provided me with further evidence to show the Green Belt boundary. The map image provided by the Council shows a closer view of the site and its' immediate surroundings. The map image includes a green line, which appears to indicate a boundary exists to the rear of the properties on Walton Gardens and Flagstaff Close. However, I do not know the source of the map image provided, nor its status, and it does not include a key. Therefore, I cannot be certain that the map image provided by the Council is an authoritative source in defining the Green Belt boundary.
7. Map 5.7 Site Allocations and Designations in Waltham Abbey, which forms part of the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 Part One (Adopted March 2023) (LP), also shows a closer view of the Green Belt boundary near to the appeal site. Map 5.7 is not of a large enough scale to show individual street names. However, the boundary line appears to follow the route and alignment of Beaulieu Drive as it heads northwards from its junction with Highbridge Road. It shows the residential developments to the east of Beaulieu Drive, including Augustine Court, as lying on land outside of the Green Belt and this reflects my interpretation of the information shown on the Policies Map. Because Map 5.7 forms part of the adopted development plan, I have ascribed it greater weight than the map image provided by the Council.
8. Taken all of the above into account, and based on the evidence that is before me, the site lies outside of the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal would not comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt and there would be no conflict with Policy DM4 of the LP or the Framework, which resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt other than in very special circumstances. It follows that it is not necessary for me to consider the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt or for very special circumstances to be present to justify the proposal.

Character and appearance

9. The RGFCAs cover an area to the north of Highbridge Road and is bound to the west by the River Lee. It encompasses some relatively modern housing developments, including Augustine Court, at its southern end; and a larger more open area of land to the north, which includes some buildings associated with the former Royal Gunpowder Factory site. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the

RGFCA. The Framework states that the significance of a heritage asset should be taken into account when considering the impact of proposals; and that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

10. I have not been provided with a Conservation Area Appraisal or formal designation statement for the RGFCA. However, from the information before me and my own observations, the special interest of the RGFCA lies in the area's historical association with the Royal Gunpowder Mills (RGM). The historic waterways off the River Lea contribute positively to the significance of the RGFCA because they were originally constructed to serve the RGM. One such waterway, Millhead Stream, runs adjacent to the appeal site. However, due to the age and contemporary appearance of the host property, and its siting within a modern residential development, the contribution the appeal building itself makes to the significance of the RGFCA is limited.
11. The proposed extensions would significantly enlarge the host property and would alter its form and proportions. However, notwithstanding the level differences across the site and the ridge height of the proposed side extension, the overall height of the building would not increase. This, along with the site's proximity to other large dwellings with a wide mix of forms and roof structures, means the proposal would not appear disproportionate in size.
12. The extensions would be largely screened behind existing buildings from the public vantage points on Beaulieu Drive; and, though the roof of the proposed side extension would be visible over fencing from Walton Gardens, this would broadly reflect the existing scenario and would not be harmful. The extent of the development in relation to Millhead Stream would be similar to 5 Augustine Court opposite and, therefore the proposal would not be unduly prominent in views from the waterway or its banks. Moreover, long views along the stream would be retained in both directions therefore I see no harm arising in this respect.
13. Overall, and having regard to all of the above, I conclude that the character and appearance of the host property and the RGFCA would be preserved. Therefore, there would be no conflict with Policies DM7 and DM9 of the LP which, taken together, expect developments to contribute to the distinctive local character and to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have attached a condition to define the permitted drawings to provide certainty. A condition requiring the materials to match the existing dwelling is necessary in order to protect the character and appearance of the host property and the RGFCA.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

E Catchside
INSPECTOR