



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2025 by L Clark MSc MRTPI

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/25/3369650

Pinnerwood Cottage, Woodhall Road, Pinner, Harrow HA5 4UA

- 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 Mrs S Goodwin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application Ref is PL/3026/24.
 - The development proposed is 'Single and two storey side to rear extension; Single storey side extension; Roof lights in rear roof slope; External alterations (Demolition of rear extension, double garage, conservatory, side canopy, oil store and removal of swimming pool).'
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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 main issues are a) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt; b) its effect on the openness of the Green Belt; c) its effect on the character and appearance of the area with specific regard to a Non Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA), the Pinnerwood Farm Conservation Area (CA) and the setting of a grade II listed building; and d) if the scheme would be inappropriate development, 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

Inappropriate Development

4. The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt, according to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), is inappropriate development and is harmful, as such, by definition. Policy DM16 of the Harrow Council Development Management Policies 2013 (DMP) explains, amongst other things, that such will be refused in absence of clearly demonstrated very special circumstances. I shall come onto these later. Policy CS 1 of the Harrow Core Strategy 2012 (CS) reflects similar, explaining that the Green Belt should not be eroded by inappropriate or insensitive development, as do the principles of Policy G2 of the London Plan 2021

(LP). The DMP also sets out that proposals for the extension and alteration of dwellings in the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with the Framework.

5. Amongst other exceptions, the Framework specifies that 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 might not be inappropriate development. Whilst this specifies building and not dwelling, the principles are one and the same as far as they relate to the appeal scheme and the cases of the main parties focus solely on this exception. I have no compelling reason to consider otherwise.
6. The main parties disagree in the amount of additional built form the appeal scheme would provide. Both refer to figures based on floor area and building footprint. The Council suggest greater percentages, with the appellant calculating in the region of 35% and 42% respectively. Both parties take this uplift over what they each deem to be the original dwelling as per the Framework's exception and definition.
7. Taking the appellant's calculations, such an uplift in floor area would certainly be more than slight or minor. Moreover, a close to half again of the land take of built form on the site over the original would be even greater. One must also consider the fact none of the evidence points to a volumetric increase of the building which would tell a more accurate story of the total space the appeal works would take up. The proposal would provide a substantial kitchen area and an accessible bedroom on the ground floor, an increase in size for two of the bedrooms on the first floor along with the provision of an additional bathroom and dressing area. The first-floor extension particularly would add a considerable bulk to the rear of the property and be an entirely different configuration of extension to the dwelling. Combined with the width of the ground floor element that would extend across most of the rear of the dwelling, the proposal would amount to a substantial increase in size to the original dwelling in the massing sense.
8. Taking all of this into account, the proposals would represent disproportionate additions over and above the original building such that they would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This would conflict with both the identification of such by the Framework and the aims of Policies CS 1 of the CS, DM 16 of the DMP and G2 of the LP as I have set them out above.

Openness

9. One of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt is its openness which, it has been established, has a visual and spatial aspect. The latter can be taken to mean the absence of built form. The proposal would be screened from wider views by the extensive landscaping that borders the site. Thus, the effect on the visual aspect would be limited. Nevertheless, the works would take up substantial space with a solid two storey structure and a sprawling land take and would therefore, unavoidably and on their own, reduce the spatial aspect of the Green Belt's openness. This would further conflict with the position of the Framework, and the aims of the aforementioned policies.
10. The appeal scheme is intended to replace some previous extensions. I shall return to this in more detail later. The appellant's evidence suggests that the sum total of what is being taken away would be more than what is being erected as part of the appeal proposals. This might suggest a net decrease in built form overall, and therefore a net increase in the Green Belt's openness in both aspects. That said, and as I have explained, the works proposed are more than a product of their size

on paper. Having regard to the materially different composition, scale and mass of the development proposed compared to that being demolished, there would remain an unacceptable loss of openness in overall presence and space terms.

Character and Appearance

11. The appeal dwelling originated in the 17th Century and is an associated cottage of the grade II listed farmhouse, Pinnerwood House. The building is locally listed and thus a NDHA for its historic and architectural interest. It has been subject to piecemeal alterations over a number of years. Some more successful than others. The property falls within the CA. The significance of which is derived, in part, from its traditional farmyard charm, mature greenery, spacious gardens and open fields. Something of an oasis in an otherwise densely developed modern urban area northwest of London. The small group of properties within the CA are attractive and hold historic value as individual examples architecturally and as a group functionally. Specifically, the grand Pinnerwood House and its subordinate cottages. They are low-density when compared to their lush surroundings. The Council's appraisal suggests that such density and the rural character in general should be maintained.
12. Whilst it has been extended, the appeal building retains much of its original rural cottage charm in the consistent external treatment, evenly spaced and repeated opening styles and a traditional composition at its central core. The appeal scheme would involve the removal of some large and visually jarring more modern additions that have historically crowded the building's core such as the much wider and shallower pitched roof double garage, the elongated conservatory and the swimming pool.
13. That said, the proposal would introduce a large extension to the rear that would be two storeys in parts. The extensions would have a bulky appearance and would not be obviously submissive to the historic dwelling but would rather compete for visual dominance. The floorspace of the dwelling would be substantially increased which would further step away from the significance of the property as a more modest scale of building. This would adversely affect the hierarchical relationship with the grander Pinnerwood House to which a key part of the status of the appeal property as a NDHA is owed. There would be a confusing array of different rooflines and some overly modern flat roof sections which would further dilute the quality of the building's traditional features and composition. I remain to be convinced that confining these more invasive works to the rear of the building would make their effects acceptable.
14. The scale, design and location of the proposed extensions would therefore cause unacceptable harm to the qualities of the building itself which would translate to both the significance of it as a NDHA, the same of the CA and the setting of the grade II listed building which, having regard to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in this regard specifically, it would not be preserved. For the CA, and as a result of the above assessment, the appeal scheme would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance thereof. Having regard to Section 72 of the same act in setting out that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of doing such. As per the requirements of the Framework, I am required to balance the harm I have found, in the statutory sense, against the public benefits of the proposals.

15. There would be some later additions removed, but it is unclear whether doing so is entirely reliant on the appeal scheme. There is a lack of compelling evidence to quantify how or why the proposals would represent the preservation of a locally listed building in viable use. I have set out why the appeal works would not be an enhancement to the CA. I am aware that the proposed development has come following previously refused designs, but it is sufficiently clear, taking the above into account, that the situation has not advanced far enough to consider what is before me acceptable. Collectively, I ascribe limited weight to these public benefits, such that they would not outweigh the harms I have found. On this main issue therefore, there would be conflict with Policies CS 1 of the CS, DM 1 and DM 7 of the DMP and HC1 of the LP which are concerned both with high quality and contextually appropriate design and appearance and protecting heritage assets amongst other things.

Other Considerations

16. The demolition of the previous extensions to effectively 'trade off' against the proposed ones appears to be, for the appellant, on a comparison of their sizes relative to the same variables as earlier. Namely the floor area and building footprint. It is suggested there would be less being erected than taken away in these regards.
17. If this were to be the case, the same matters in regard to a lack of a volumetric comparison and the scale, mass and composition of the proposed extensions would apply. Also, it remains inconclusive from the evidence as to whether the built form that is proposed for removal formed part of the original dwelling for the Framework's purposes. If it did not, then one must consider the proposed extensions on their own merits for which I have made a finding. If they were, I have explained why, notwithstanding that, the proposals would amount to being inappropriate for the Green Belt and that they would unacceptably reduce the openness thereof. I thus attach limited weight to the trade off situation.
18. A lack of harm, to living conditions specifically, would be neutral and as such would not weigh in favour of the appeal scheme.
19. I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which sets out the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Disability is a protected characteristic to which the PSED applies.
20. The proposal has been designed to create an accessible ground floor bedroom and bathroom for a disabled occupant. This is a matter of importance to which I afford considerable weight. However, and in this instance, the development proposed would be permanent and remain indefinitely regardless of the needs of future occupiers. It is also unclear as to whether the same outcome could not be met by other, potentially less harmful, means. Therefore, the harms I have identified are such that a dismissal of the appeal would be a proportionate and necessary response that would not be outweighed by the requirements of the PSED.

Conclusion and Recommendation

21. There would be harm to the Green Belt by virtue of the appeal scheme being inappropriate development and unacceptably reducing openness. This attracts substantial weight. There would also be harm to the significance of the CA, a NDHA and the setting of a listed building. I have taken into account other considerations advanced and, for the reasons I have set out, they would not attract sufficient weight to clearly outweigh the harms I have found. Such that the very special circumstances needed to justify the appeal scheme do not exist. Material considerations do not therefore indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan, with which there would be multiple conflicts for the reasons I have given. Such that I am led to recommending the appeal is dismissed.

L Clark

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

John Morrison

INSPECTOR