



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2025

by **E Heron MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A0665/D/25/3363079

Holbeck, Grove Road, Mollington, Chester CH1 6LG

- 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 and Mrs Goddard against the decision of Cheshire West and Chester Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03106/FUL.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension. Render and cladding externally. New windows and doors externally. Sill details added to windows.
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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 relevant development plan policies;
- the effect of the proposal 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 very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
4. Paragraph 154 of the Framework, sets out that development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, subject to a number of specific exceptions. These include 154 c), the extension or alteration of a building providing that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
5. Policy Strat 9 of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (Local Plan Part One) refers to restrictions applying to development within the Green Belt to be in line with the Framework. Policy DM21 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (Local Plan Part Two) reiterates that the resulting development

should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

6. The Framework does not provide a definition of 'disproportionate additions' and therefore this assessment is a matter of planning judgment. As general guidance, the supporting text of Policy DM21 states that subordinate and small scale extensions should not increase the size of the original dwelling by more than 30%. The glossary to the Framework describes the original building as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
7. The original dwelling was significantly extended in 1975 under planning permission 6/1449. The proposed development is a first floor extension over the attached double garage, together with other minor alterations to the existing dwelling. The development would be less than 30% of the size of the existing building.
8. However, both the Framework and Policy DM21 of the Local Plan Part Two, express the comparison to be with the original building; as it was built originally. This is regardless of whether the existing building has a cohesive appearance due to the use of harmonious materials. Therefore, the development, cumulatively with the previous extension, is a substantial addition over and above the size of the original and amounts to a disproportionate addition.
9. The development would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is by definition harmful, such that it conflicts with the requirements of the Framework, Policy Strat 9 of the Local Plan Part One, and Policy DM21 of the Local Plan Part Two.

Openness

10. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume.
11. The appeal property is within a small settlement location, with open fields to the rear, and significant space between dwellings due to the size of individual plots. The upper walls and roof of the main part of the dwelling are visible from the adjacent highway above the boundary hedge. The garage is visible through the site access. As it is single storey, there is notable space to the front, side and above it, and it is apparent that there is undeveloped land to the rear. Its single-storey height provides visual relief from the two-storey forward projection that dominates the site frontage and provides a sense of space at the road junction.
12. The proposed development would increase the volume, height and massing of the building. It would be a substantial solid structure at first floor height, eroding the space above the garage and disrupting the openness towards the undeveloped land to the rear. It would also reduce the space between the dwelling and the school building on the opposite side of the junction with Gypsy Lane. As such its massing and volume would erode spatial and visual openness.

Other considerations

13. The development would be subservient to the host dwelling, and the proposed design and materials would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore comply with the development plan in these respects. However, the absence of other harms is a neutral factor.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

14. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would harm openness. The Framework requires that substantial weight be given to any harm to the Green Belt. The other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm, and therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
15. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole, and no material considerations of sufficient weight have been advanced to justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR