



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2025

by **P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/D/25/3369527

Greenfield Cottage, Middletown Lane, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7PW

- 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 John Parker against the decision of Stratford-On-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01157/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Rear and Side extension.
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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, and the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host building; and,
 - if there would be harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, whether the harm would be clearly outweighed by other considerations to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. Located within the West Midlands Green Belt, the appeal site relates to a single storey detached house in a substantial plot in the countryside. The house is set back behind a large, detached house, known as Middletown Farm, and is accessed along the side of it. There are 2 wooden sheds next to the access with an open field beyond. The appeal house consists of 2 gable ended wings, side by side, with a link between them. The larger wing was originally a barn which was converted and extended. The house has a rear garden with stables at the back and a menage with fields to the side and rear.
4. According to the Framework, inappropriate development in the Green Belt, by definition, is harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Policy CS.10 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy (2016)

(CS) sets out exceptions that are not considered inappropriate development which are consistent with paragraphs 154 and 155 of the Framework and includes small scale extensions. The policy supporting text reflects the advice in the Framework, stating that extensions should not be disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5. According to the appellant, the original building was 76 sqm and a previous extension added 28 sqm. The proposed extensions would increase the size of the dwelling by a further 57.7 sqm leading to a cumulative increase over its original footprint of 85.7 sqm or 112%, according to my calculations, not the 126% suggested by the council. Nonetheless, in combination with the existing extensions the proposed development would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and would be inappropriate development and conflict with Policy CS.10 of the CS and the Framework, insofar as they seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Openness

6. The house is only visible from the public highway from directly in front of the access. Approaching the site from the north, roadside hedgerows and Middleton Farm obscure views of it, and from the south it is screened by mature hedgerows along Middletown Lane. The house is visible from first floor windows of houses along nearby Middletown, although intervening vegetation partially screen views of it. Also, from these views it is seen as part of a complex of buildings comprising the barn at the rear of the property and the house and barn associated with Middletown Farm. Therefore, in the context of the enclosed and screened nature of the appeal site the proposed extensions would have little visual impact on openness. Also, notwithstanding the extensions would be disproportionate compared to the size of the original building, in the context of the surrounding buildings their spatial impact on the openness of the Green Belt would be minor.
7. Although not included within the description of the development, the appellant has indicated that they would accept a planning condition requiring the demolition of the 2 wooden outbuildings adjacent to the access. These should have been demolished under a condition attached to a previous planning consent, Ref 11/00306/FUL, for the barn and menage behind the house, and according to the appellant are now lawful because of the lapsed time for enforcing the planning condition. The matter of whether they are lawful is not for my consideration. Nonetheless, as the council included their removal within its assessment, I have also had regard to it.
8. The outbuildings sit in front of the house and are visible when passing close to the entrance to the appeal site on Middletown Lane but are otherwise screened from the highway and public viewpoints due to the surrounding hedgerows and the enclosed nature of the appeal site, as described above. According to the appellants measurements, the 2 buildings combined size is 49.49 sqm and their removal would lead to a net reduction in the footprint of buildings at the appeal site, taking into account the proposed extensions, of 1.79 sqm. That would be a negligible improvement to spatial openness. Their removal would only be discernible from within the site or from very close to the entrance to it and thus the improvement to visual openness would be very limited. As such, I accord any benefit of their removal to the openness of the Green Belt little weight.

Character and appearance

9. The appeal property comprises 2 linked wings one of which is an extension, the addition of which has already compromised the linear form of the original building and given it the appearance of a house rather than a converted barn, as the appellant suggests. Therefore, I attach limited weight to the advice in paragraphs G7 and G8 of the council's Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Document (2021) (SPD) which deals with conversions of traditional agricultural buildings and alterations to them, respectively.
10. The proposed extensions would be to the side and rear of the main wing which formed the original building. The materials would match that of the host dwelling, but glazing at the rear would extend from the floor to the roof and appear at odds with the smaller windows elsewhere on the building. The angle of the roof plane on the dual pitched roofs would vary on each side and, whilst they would match each other, would be at odds with the roof pitch of the existing wings and appear incongruous. The proposed extensions would substantially alter the form of the original building, which the existing extension sought to reflect, and thus upset the balance between the 2 wings. I therefore consider that the extensions would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling. However, given that it is screened from most views, the harm would be limited. Nonetheless, the proposed development would conflict with policies CS.9 and CS.20 of the CS and Part G of the SPD which require development to be of an appropriate scale that integrates with the existing built form.

Other considerations

11. There would be benefits in terms of improving the existing living space, but this is a personal benefit and as such carries little weight. There would also be modest benefits arising from short term employment during the extension's construction and from passive solar gain and light to the property.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. In accordance with the Framework, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. The proposed extension would also harm the character and appearance of the host property. The other considerations put forward do not clearly outweigh the substantial weight that I give to the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness and effect on openness that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The proposed extension would not accord with the development plan and there are no other material considerations to outweigh that finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should not succeed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR