



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2025

by Elaine Moulton BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M0655/D/25/3367183

25 Massey Avenue, Lymm, Warrington WA13 0PJ

- 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 Simon and Sharon Sawyer and Livesey against the decision of Warrington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/00191/FULH.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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;
 - 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 the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. The appeal property lies in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate unless it falls within identified exceptions set out in the Framework. One such exception, at paragraph 154(c), is 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. Insofar as it relates to the appeal scheme, Policy GB1 of the Warrington Local Plan (LP), adopted December 2023, is consistent with the Framework as, amongst other things, it includes a general presumption against inappropriate development.
4. Neither the Framework nor LP Policy GB1 define what is meant by a disproportionate addition. However, the House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) states any extensions and additions that result in an increase in size of more than 33% of the original building will be considered to be disproportionate and therefore unacceptable. This measurement is based

predominantly on floorspace and volume. Even though the SPD is not referenced in the Council's decision and does not form part of the development plan, it is a material consideration to which I give weight in my decision.

5. The main parties agree that cumulatively the proposed extension would result in a floorspace increase of the original building of 43.7% and a volume increase of 58.8%. There is nothing before me that would lead me to disagree with such calculations. This is a significant exceedance of the 33% guidance in both respects. Furthermore, it is not just the percentage increases that is determinative to my judgement. In this case the proposal would wrap around two sides of the semi-detached dwelling and would add a considerable mass to the building greatly increasing its overall size. I therefore find that it would result in disproportionate additions to the original building.
6. Accordingly, the proposal would be inappropriate development, and, in that regard, it would conflict with LP Policy GB1.

Openness

7. Paragraph 142 of the Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
8. Due to it being single storey, the proposal would not be prominent in views from the public highway. Nevertheless, it would increase the scale and massing of the dwelling and, by virtue of its considerably larger footprint than the car port that would be replaced, would introduce built form where there is currently none. I therefore conclude that the proposal would lead to moderate harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Other considerations

9. The appellants have set out a possible fall-back position, namely the construction of extensions under permitted development (PD) rights. The potential fall-back position, illustrated within the appellants' case, extends beyond the rear wall of the original semi-detached dwellinghouse by more than 3 metres. Therefore, it would be subject to a prior approval application process and, notwithstanding that no objections to the appeal proposal were received, there are no guarantees such an extension would be granted approval.
10. I acknowledge that smaller extensions could be constructed without the need to go through the prior approval process. However, their total volume and floorspace would be considerably less than the proposal before me.
11. Consequently, a directly comparable development to the appeal proposal could not be brought forward under PD rights should planning permission be refused. As a result, I attribute limited weight to the fallback position that is set out in the appellants' case.
12. The appellant has provided copies of several previous appeal decisions and has referred to the approval of extensions at other properties on Massey Avenue. However, the full details of those cases, including their design and context, are not before me. I am therefore unable to assess any direct comparability to the current appeal proposal and have afforded limited weight to such developments. In any event, the Massey Avenue developments were determined before the adoption of

the current development plan and SPD. Furthermore, in each of the appeal decisions the decision maker exercised a planning judgement on the specifics that were before them, which included the guidance that applied, and the relationship of the proposal to the host dwelling, which is consistent with the approach I have adopted in this case.

Green Belt balance and conclusions

13. Paragraph 153 of the Framework states that when considering any planning application, substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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.
14. I have concluded that the appeal scheme would be inappropriate development and would, by definition, harm the Green Belt. I have also found moderate harm to its openness.
15. The other considerations I have identified are of limited weight in favour of the proposal. Consequently, these considerations, along with all other matters acknowledged in the evidence, do not clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt, either individually or collectively, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweighs the identified harms and associated development plan conflict.
17. Accordingly, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Moulton

INSPECTOR