



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2025

by **David Cross BA(Hons) PgDip(Dist) TechIOA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/W/25/3368696

Orchard Meadow Farm, Upper Heights Road, Thornton, Bradford BD13 3AY

- 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 Allarakha Adalat against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00327/FUL.
 - The development proposed is construction of one detached dwelling and associated landscaping, including the removal of agricultural structures.
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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; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether Inappropriate Development

3. The appeal site is within the Green Belt. Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that the development of homes in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where a number of criteria apply.
4. In respect of the criteria of Paragraph 155(a) of the Framework, the Council accepts that the appeal site can be considered as Grey Belt land. The principle of residential development on the site has previously been accepted due to a planning permission granted for the change of use of an existing barn. Although the proposal would be apparent as a new-built dwelling in the Green Belt compared to a barn conversion, the proposal would affect only a limited extent of the Green Belt. On that basis, I consider that the proposal would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. Based on what I have seen and read, the proposal would meet the criteria of Paragraph 155(a).
5. With regard to Paragraph 155(b), the Council accepts that within the latest Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results the measurement fell below the 75% threshold. In

accordance with Paragraph 155(b) and Footnote 56 of the Framework, this demonstrates an unmet need for this type of development, and on that basis the proposal would comply with Paragraph 155(b). Although the proposal would not lead to a net increase in housing supply given the fallback of the approved conversion of the barn to a dwelling, this criterion relates to a demonstrable unmet need based on the HDT results rather than whether there is an extant permission on the site.

6. In respect of Paragraph 155(c) the site is some distance away from services and facilities and it is unlikely that the site is suitably served by public transport. However, given the previous permission for the barn conversion to a dwelling, the Council accepts that the result of either a change of use of an existing building or the construction of a new one would be the same. Consequently, the Council concludes that the site can be considered to occupy a sustainable location, and I see no reason to disagree.
7. Regarding Paragraph 155(d), the proposal is neither a major development nor for affordable housing, and the criteria of this paragraph therefore do not apply.
8. Drawing the above together, I conclude that the proposed dwelling would meet the relevant criteria of Paragraph 155 of the Framework. On that basis, the proposal should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
9. The Council refers to conflicts with criteria of Paragraphs 154(g) and 143(c) of the Framework, but these do not negate the compliance with Paragraph 155.
10. In its reason for refusal on this issue, the Council refers to policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2005 (RUDP). However, the wording of Policy GB1 does not reflect that of the Framework, and the supporting text sets out that the nature of very special circumstances is open to demonstration. On that basis, I consider that the compliance of the development with the Framework in respect of development on Green Belt land is a demonstration of the very special circumstances referred to in that policy.
11. Policy GB2 of the RUDP relates to the visual amenities of the Green Belt which do not fall within the consideration of inappropriate development as set out in the Framework and as applied to the circumstances of the appeal site. Policy GB3 relates to settlements washed over by the Green Belt, and the Council has not demonstrated that the appeal site is within one of the listed settlements. In any event, the wording of Policy GB3 does not reflect the Framework regarding development of Green Belt land. Any conflicts with Policies GB2 and GB3 do not lead me to a different conclusion on the compliance of the proposal with the Framework regarding development in the Green Belt.

Character and Appearance

12. The appeal site is in the Thornton & Queensbury Landscape Character Area, which is described in an SPD¹. The objectives of the SPD are to protect and enhance the character, appearance and features which are important to the landscape and encourage an integrated approach to development which includes consideration of landscape issues. The SPD describes the landscape character as an area of traditional pasture dominated landscape with scattered farmsteads.

¹ Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document Volume 6: Thornton and Queensbury, October 2008

13. Due to the sloping topography, the site is prominent in views from the surrounding area, particularly in views from the north including from Lower Heights Road.
14. It is viewed against the backdrop of a cluster of traditional buildings, including dwellings and former barns. Although some of these buildings are of a relatively large scale and massing, they are of an understated character reflective of the farming history of the area.
15. In contrast, the proposed dwelling would be a substantial free-standing building of an imposing design. Rather than reflecting the understated rural character of nearby buildings, the design of the most prominent elevations as well as the scale of the building would give it a suburban character that would jar with the understated rural appearance of nearby buildings and the landscape. Although relatively decorative features including a 2-storey bay window and extents of glazing would face into the site and would therefore be well-screened in views from the surrounding area, the unacceptable design and scale of the more prominent elevations would still be apparent. The use of traditional materials would also do little to mitigate for the incongruous design of the dwelling.
16. I have had regard to the Visual Impact Statement submitted by the appellant. But this served to confirm the prominent and obtrusive nature of the proposed dwelling in views of the area, particularly in near to medium distance views from the north and even allowing for screening provided by trees.
17. The fallback scheme of the barn conversion would also introduce a residential use onto the site. However, although the barn is a substantial modern structure, its conversion would be viewed as an evolution of the agricultural nature of the site and the area, rather than the imposition of a large dwelling of an unsuitable design.
18. The appellant submits that the appeal proposal would have a smaller volume compared to existing structures on the site. However, the increased height of the dwelling compared to the barn would be readily apparent, and it would not replicate the stepped down arrangement of the barn compared to nearby buildings within the sloping landscape. Existing structures on the site may also be removed as part of the conversion of the barn, and the removal of these structures therefore carries little weight in favour of the appeal.
19. I therefore conclude that, due to its design and location, the proposal would lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the design and landscape requirements of Policies EN4 and DS2 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2017. The proposal would also be contrary to the advice of the SPD with regard to the consideration of design and landscape.

Other Matters

20. I note the comments made in support of the proposal, including a reference to the circumstances of a potential resident. However, based on the evidence before me, these benefits can also be achieved through the change of use of the barn, and they do not lead me to a different conclusion on the planning merits of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

21. Notwithstanding my conclusions regarding inappropriate development in the Green Belt, I conclude that the proposal would lead to significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan when considered as a whole regarding design and landscape and the effect on character and appearance. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cross

INSPECTOR