



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2025

by **C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/D/25/3370939

Mayfield, Pudsey Hall Lane, Canewdon, Essex, SS4 3RY

- 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 James Pratt against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00422/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear/side corner and infill extensions with pitched roof extension and fenestration alterations.
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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 and any relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - if the proposal is inappropriate development, whether the 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 the proposal constitutes inappropriate development

3. The appeal property lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Framework states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of a defined exception listed in paragraph 154. Part (c) of paragraph 154 affords for 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. 'Original building' is defined in the Glossary of the Framework as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
4. Policy DM17 of the Rochford District Council Development Management Plan 2014 (the Local Plan) states that applications for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will be considered favourably provided the proposal would result in no more than a 25% increase in internal floorspace of the original dwelling, and also

provided there is no material increase in the overall height of the dwelling and there is no impact on the character and appearance of the Green Belt through scale, mass and orientation. The Policy also requires there to be no harm to the character of the countryside.

5. The appeal property is a detached single storey dwelling. It lies at the end of a rural lane which contains sporadic development of housing, along with commercial activities and a caravan site, interspersed with paddocks and fields. The landscape is generally flat and open in character.
6. The Council calculate the floorspace of the original dwelling as-built to be 34.4 sq. m, with Policy DM17 thus allowing an increase of 8.6 sq. m. The property has been extended a number of times since it was originally constructed with a rear extension and link between the dwelling and the garage, which the Council calculate as adding 71.5 sq. m. That represents an increase to date of over 200% over the original, and this is not disputed by the appellant. Those past extensions are clearly visible as sizeable additions to the original dwelling.
7. The previous extensions already represent a considerable increase in scale over the size of the original building. The proposed extensions in this appeal are for extensions to the front and rear/side, and conversion of the garage. The roof of the property as it sits over the original dwelling would be extended over the later extensions and converted garage, continuing the existing ridge height.
8. The appellant states that the extensions now proposed are limited in size. However, Policy DM17 and the Framework require an appraisal against the original dwelling; account must also be taken of previous additions when determining whether or not current proposals would be a disproportionate extension or alteration. The proposed further addition in floorspace would, together with the previous extensions, represent a very substantial increase over the original dwelling, which would be significantly beyond the quantitative guideline set out in the development plan.
9. The cumulative scale of this proposed increase over the original would be clearly manifested on site. The rear extension would be seen as a very sizeable addition, whilst the side and front extension would – with the extended roof above – be seen as large additions to the original dwelling. Taken together, the proposed extensions would represent a significant increase in the bulk and massing of the property. This represents a sizeable addition to the already enlarged building. Together with the previous extensions it is apparent to me the original building would be very significantly increased in volume and scale. This size and scale would represent a clearly disproportionate addition to the original building.
10. Accordingly, the proposal does not fall within the exception at paragraph 154(c) of the Framework. The proposal would be inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and in conflict with the Framework and Policy DM17 of the Local Plan.

Impact on openness

11. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl and keep land permanently open, and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. It has been established that openness has both a spatial and visual aspect.

12. The side/rear extension would be sited where there is an element of natural screening due to the positioning of the property. The extension at the front would infill an area between the property and the garage. However, the works would see the large addition to the roof that would be readily visible and reduce views across the building, and this would make the property more prominent in the surrounds. From a spatial perspective the proposals would thus lead to a material reduction in the openness of the Green Belt.
13. The siting and scale of the proposed development would directly contravene the purpose of the Green Belt and harm openness.

Other considerations

14. The design of the extension would rationalise the layout of the property through 'squaring off' the existing rear extension, and infilling a space at the front of the property. The extended roof would also present a more symmetrical appearance to the building. This would preserve the character of the area, and hence satisfy the provisions of Policy DM17 insofar as it seeks no harm to character; that is also sought by Policy DM1. The absence of harm to character is a neutral matter that does not weigh for or against the proposal.
15. The design and position of the extensions would not cause any harm to the amenity of neighbours, and this is similarly a neutral matter.
16. The proposal is to provide an extension to a private home, providing additional space for living. I attach limited weight to this personal circumstance.
17. The appellant states there are permitted development rights for extensions to the property which would be similar to the current proposals. I have not been provided with any formal confirmation that such extensions could be undertaken, and I note the Council's doubts regarding such a claim given the past extensions to the property and the proximity of the dwelling to boundaries. Based on the evidence presented to me I share those reservations, and hence doubt there is a theoretical possibility that similar extensions through permitted development rights could be achieved. I thus further consider there is no real prospect of such extensions occurring through permitted development and so I attach little weight to this matter.
18. My attention has been drawn to other development and uses of land in the vicinity of the appeal site. Very little information has been provided regarding the circumstances leading to any grants of permission for these, if there have been any, and I have determined the current proposals on the basis of its merits and in relation to the relevant planning policies. Hence, I attach very little weight to this matter.

Whether very special circumstances exist

19. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and it would result in harm to openness. The Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework further advises that 'very special circumstances' to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

20. I do not consider the matters raised in support of the proposal to clearly outweigh the harm identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given, the conflict with national and local planning policy means that the appeal should fail.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR