



---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

by **K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2025

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/25/3371818**

**31 Browns Way, Aspley Guise, Central Bedfordshire, MK17 8JB**

- 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 & Mrs Nicholson against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
  - The application Ref is CB/25/01571/FULL.
  - The development proposed is a loft conversion to include raising height of existing roof, raising height of existing chimney stack to side, new dormer extensions to front roof slope and rooflights to rear roof slope.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion to include raising height of existing roof, raising height of existing chimney stack to side, new dormer extensions to front roof slope and rooflights to rear roof slope at 31 Browns Way, Aspley Guise, Central Bedfordshire, MK17 8JB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CB/25/01571/FULL, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2302/04-25: sheet 1 of 4; sheet 2 of 4; sheet 3 of 4 and sheet 4 of 4.
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

### Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. Firstly, whether the proposed development would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, and any relevant development plan policies; and secondly, the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the street scene of Browns Way.

## Reasons

### *Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt*

3. The appeal site is located in a cul-de-sac of modern houses at the edge of Aspley Guise. It is one of four similar detached red brick houses under shallow tiled roofs set on rising land at the end of the cul-de-sac and surrounded by semi-rural, open land. These dwellings appear older and larger than the majority of dwellings in the street and have noticeable attached single storey elements. They are arranged in a spacious staggered layout and set on generous, sloping plots. The appeal dwelling is sited on the highest ground, well separated from its closest neighbour, with a backdrop of rising ground and trees.
4. The proposed development comprises increasing the ridge height of the roof by some 1.5m to accommodate a loft conversion. Three small dormer windows would be inserted in the front roof slope. These would be arranged above existing first floor windows and their pitched roofs would be below the new ridgeline. Two rooflights would be inserted in the rear roof slope.
5. Policy SP4 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (LP), adopted 2021, states that within the Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. It goes on to say that in settlements that are “washed over” by the Green Belt, such as Aspley Guise, particular attention should be paid to the openness of the site and its surroundings. Further, development in the Green Belt will be judged against the NPPF and other government guidance.
6. The NPPF states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is harmful by definition and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The NPPF goes on to explain that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate except in a number of limited circumstances. One exception is the extension of an existing building, provided that the extension does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling.
7. The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (DG), 2023, states that in order to protect the openness and amenity of the Green Belt buildings should not be increased by more than 60% of the original footprint, floorspace and volume. The impact of an extension in terms of massing and design will also be considered. The appeal dwelling has not been extended in the past. The Council estimates that the extended dwelling would have a floorspace some 21% greater than the original dwelling which would fall well within the 60% margin. There would be no increase in footprint and the Council does not suggest that any volumetric increase would exceed the 60% rule which appears to be the case.
8. Nevertheless, the Council considers that the increase in roof height and massing and the addition of the proposed dormers would give the dwelling a dominant and top-heavy appearance and would represent additions that would be disproportionate to the original dwelling. However, in view of the shallow pitch of the original roof and the size of the dwelling I am satisfied that the

proposed increase in height would not appear incongruous or disproportionate in the context of the original dwelling as a whole. Neither would the modest, well designed dormers appear unduly large or out of proportion with the original dwelling.

9. It is therefore concluded on the first main issue that the proposed extension would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In consequence, there would be no conflict with LP Policy SP4 or with the NPPF insofar as they seek to control extensions in the Green Belt. The courts have determined that where development is found to be “not inappropriate” it should not be regarded as harmful to either the openness of the Green Belt or to the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the issue of effect on character and appearance.

#### *Character and appearance*

10. I have already found that, in terms of massing and design, the proposed extension would not appear disproportionate to the host dwelling. Moreover, notwithstanding guidance in the DG regarding roof pitch and dormers, I do not find that in this case the increase in pitch or the dormers would appear unsympathetic or out of place in the context of the host dwelling. Nevertheless, in its second reason for refusal the Council cites LP Policy HQ1 which is a general design policy that covers other design issues. In particular it is expected that extensions should relate well to the existing local surroundings and reinforce local distinctiveness so as to create a sense of place.
11. As one of four similar dwellings, the appeal dwelling contributes to the harmony in this part of Browns Way. However, the layout and topography mean that whilst similar design is a factor, others such as scale and setting make a fundamental contribution to the pleasant, semi-rural character of the group. In this case, the appeal dwelling is already higher than its neighbours by virtue of the steeply rising ground and its position at the top of the cul-de-sac. The increase in roof height would not disrupt this stepping up and would thus maintain the existing hierarchy.
12. The addition of front dormers would further alter and draw attention to the roof of the appeal dwelling. Nevertheless, their small size and careful positioning would ensure they did not dominate the roofscape or result in a change to the character or appearance of the dwelling that would materially detract from the harmonious character of the group. I therefore consider that the proposed extension would relate well to the existing surroundings and would ensure local distinctiveness was maintained, so as to preserve the sense of place.
13. It is concluded on the second main issue that the proposed extension would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area, including the street scene of Browns Way. In consequence, it would comply with LP Policy HQ1 and the NPPF.

#### **Conditions and conclusion**

14. The Council suggests three conditions in addition to the statutory commencement condition. I agree that the development should be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in materials to match the existing

dwelling in order to provide certainty and to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

15. However, I consider that a condition requiring the front facing ensuite window to be obscure glazed is not necessary to safeguard the privacy of occupiers of adjoining properties because the window would face the driveway and street and not look towards windows serving habitable rooms in other dwellings. Moreover, there is a significant distance between the dwellings. I shall not, therefore, impose this condition.
16. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*KE Down*  
INSPECTOR