



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2025

by R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V4250/D/25/3373782

349 Gathurst Road, Orrell, Wigan WN5 8QE

- 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 David Hurst against the decision of Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is A/25/099190/HH.
 - The development proposed is proposed summer house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The decision notice refers to a conflict with Policy GP-G9 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2024) (PfE) but it is clear from the Officer Report (OR) that the correct policy reference is Policy JP-G9.

Main Issues

3. 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 relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - whether any harm by reasons 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

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow which is located to the west of Gathurst Road, a residential cul-de-sac off the B5206. It is in the Green Belt.
5. Paragraph 153 of the Framework requires substantial weight be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness, stating that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions in paragraph 154 and 155 of the Framework apply. It is common ground between the parties that the exception at paragraph 154 c) is relevant, namely '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.’

6. PfE Policy JP-G9 seeks to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt without harm to its openness, permanence or ability to serve its five purposes. This policy conforms with the provisions of the Framework.
7. Saved Policy GB1B of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan (2006) (UDP) states that extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt will only be allowed where:
 - (a) They do not exceed the cubic content of the original property by more than 75%; and
 - (b) in any case, are not more than 200 cubic metres and that the sum of additions to the original property does not exceed 200 cubic metres.
 - (c) On sites within the Green Belt the scheme must not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.
8. Parts (a) and (b) of UDP Policy GB1B are more prescriptive than the Framework. Nevertheless, they outline local criteria for what would comprise a disproportionate addition over and above an original building. Moreover, the supporting text to the policy explains that they will be applied as a *guide* to judging when the scale and size of an extension would prejudice the primary purposes of the Green Belt. Parts (a) and (b) are not therefore inconsistent with the Framework. However, because paragraph 154 c) does not require an extension to a building to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, it takes primacy over part (c) which is inconsistent with the Framework.
9. Although UDP Policy GB1B refers to the ‘original’ property as existing on 4th November 1991, the Framework explains that an original building is a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if it was constructed after that date, as it was built originally. Based on the ‘Previous Relevant Decisions’ in the OR, the bungalow was built in the late 1980s, with planning permission first granted in 1996 to extend it (to the rear). Therefore, on either definition, the original building for the assessment of proportionality is the bungalow as it was built.
10. The Council has calculated that the original volume of the bungalow was around 233m³, and that a recent extension to the side and rear¹ resulted in an additional volume of around 358m³, equating to an increase of around 154%. Although the volume of the proposed summer house would be modest (around 43m³), on the Council’s figures it would result in a 172% increase in cubic content of the bungalow as originally built. This would far exceed the limits set out in UDP Policy GB1B (a) and (b).
11. The appellant has not provided a calculation of the increase in footprint or floorspace of the bungalow, nor are the Council’s volume calculations disputed. However, the ‘Existing Site Plan’ in the OR shows there have already been very substantial increases in the bungalow’s footprint and floorspace. Whilst the proposed summer house would be a relatively small addition, when combined with these existing extensions, it would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

¹ LPA ref. A/20/90347/HH

12. I conclude that the proposal does not meet the exception in Paragraph 154 c) of the Framework and would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Effect on openness

13. 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. The Planning Practice Guidance advises² that assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case. Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects.
14. The proposed summer house would be sited to the rear of the bungalow, largely out of view, and looking back from the open field it would be seen alongside the varied rear elevations of dwellings along this side of Gathurst Road. Therefore, in visual terms its effect on openness would be minimal. However, although the ridgeline of the eaves would be below the gable of its host, and it would extend across only part of the rear elevation, the summer house would nevertheless project further into the garden than the existing bungalow and toward the open fields beyond the boundary. Consequently, it would result in a moderate level of harm to the spatial openness of the Green Belt.

Other considerations

15. The Framework states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
16. The proposed summer house would add further living space to the living room, but given the scale of this benefit, I can attach it only minimal weight.
17. The main parties agree that the design of the summer house would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, or on the living conditions of neighbours. I find no reason to consider otherwise on these matters. However, the absence of such harm is a neutral factor, attracting neither positive nor negative weight.
18. The appellant asserts that an additional storey could be added to the bungalow under permitted development rights afforded by Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA(b) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). The appellant calculates that this would equate to a potential volumetric increase of the bungalow of 485m³. However, I have no persuasive evidence that such a development would be carried out, particularly as it is a wholly different type of accommodation to the summer house proposed. Furthermore, as the 'Existing Site Plan' in the OR³ shows that the bungalow has already been extended around 8m beyond the rear elevation, I am not satisfied that there would be permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A.1(g) of the GPDO for a further ground floor rear extension. Accordingly, these matters provide very little support for the proposal.

² Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 64-013-20250225

³ Planning application LPA Ref. A/16/82018/FULL

Other Matters

19. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples of other rear extensions and a variety of detached outbuildings within gardens along the western side of Gathurst Road. However, I have insufficient information before me to be able to ascertain whether these examples are directly comparable to the appeal proposal, particularly whether the size of the extension or outbuilding is a proportionate addition to the original building.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

20. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would also cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I attach substantial weight to the associated Green Belt harm.
21. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The other considerations put forward carry minimal weight. It follows that the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm is not clearly outweighed by other considerations in this case. Therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify the proposed development do not exist.
22. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with the Framework, PfE policies JP-P1 and JP-G9, UDP Policy GB1B and Policy CP10 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy (2013). Together, these require new development to respect the locality, in terms of size and scale without harm to the openness of the Green Belt and that extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt fall within prescribed limitations.
23. For the above reasons, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR