



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/25/3369176

Moor Top Farm, Whitelow Lane, Sheffield S17 3AG

- 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 Sean Murphy against the decision of Sheffield City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01477/FUL.
 - The development proposed is for the installation of 7no. lampposts along the existing driveway and 1no. CCTV pole close to Whitelow Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The planning application form stated that the proposed work had been completed, and I saw on my site visit that the lampposts and CCTV pole have been installed. I have considered the appeal on this basis. In the banner heading above, I have removed reference to 'retrospective planning application' as this is not a form of development.
3. The appeal site is in the Green Belt. Although this is not a matter raised in the decision notice, the parties have been provided with the opportunity to comment on whether the development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt, and I have taken these into account in my consideration of the appeal. In commenting, the parties have not referred me to any relevant Green Belt policies in the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (1998) (UDP). I have therefore assessed the development on the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as it relates to Green Belt policy.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, including its effect on the openness and purposes of the Green Belt, having regard to the Framework;
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, having particular regards to its landscape setting;
 - 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

5. Paragraph 153 of the Framework requires substantial weight to 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. Although the footnote to paragraph 153 refers to 'other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land,' this is only in cases where development is not inappropriate. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions in paragraphs 154 and 155 of the Framework apply.
6. To be regarded as not inappropriate development under the exception at paragraph 154(b) of the Framework, the provision of appropriate facilities, including buildings, must first be for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, burial grounds or allotments. The existing use of the site clearly does not fall within this closed list. Accordingly, the development does not fall within the paragraph 154(b) exception.
7. It is common ground between the parties that the lampposts and CCTV pole are an 'engineering operation', albeit a minor one. I agree and paragraph 154(h) of the Framework is therefore relevant. This states that 'other forms of development,' which includes engineering operations, are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
8. The Framework identifies that a fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to keep land permanently open, and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Whether or not any change will have an adverse impact, and so cause harm to openness, might depend on factors such as the scale of the development, its locational context, and its spatial and/or visual implications.
9. The development introduces several permanent vertical structures extending away from the dwelling, where they historically did not exist. The lampposts are highly visible when travelling in either direction on Whitelow Lane, seen as a row of regularly spaced domestic features in an otherwise predominantly open, agricultural landscape. Although set slightly lower than the road, the lampposts are nevertheless sizeable at around 4m high. This height, in combination with the ornate fluted column and lantern design, draws the eye to the driveway and gives the lampposts undue prominence. Consequently, it has a detrimental impact on the spatial aspect of the openness of the Green Belt.
10. I observed that trees have been planted along much of the length of the driveway. These have been planted in between the lampposts and therefore, even when mature, they would be unlikely to be effective in fully screening or absorbing their visual impact, particularly at times of the year when the trees are not in leaf. Furthermore, the trees would not mature for some time and, in any event, cannot be relied upon in perpetuity to hide development that is otherwise harmful.
11. The appellant has proposed a condition which would require details to be approved of measures to screen light emission towards Hathersage Road, a timing mechanism for the use of the lighting, a PIR detector to activate the lighting in the evening and at night and specified hours of use. However, these measures would only reduce the visibility of the lampposts for periods of time during the hours of

darkness and would not sufficiently mitigate the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt by their physical appearance the rest of the time.

12. The CCTV pole is around 3.4m high, including the two separate dome cameras, and it appears a prominent, urbanising feature sited behind a low stone wall, just inside the field boundary on the Whitelow Lane frontage, distant from the dwelling.
13. I therefore consider that the development results in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and it would not meet the paragraph 154(h) exception.
14. 'Grey belt' land is defined in the Framework as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt purposes at (a), (b), or (d) of paragraph 143. These are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
15. Even if I were to accept that the appeal site does not strongly contribute to these purposes, to be regarded as not inappropriate, the development would need to meet all the criteria at paragraph 155 of the Framework. Given the rural location of Moor Top Farm, the appellant considers there to be a need for additional security and lighting, but I have no persuasive evidence before me that there is a need for the prominent type that has been installed. Consequently, criterion b) of paragraph 155 would not be met which requires a 'demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.'
16. For these reasons, I conclude that the development would not fall within the exception at paragraph 154(b) or (h) or under paragraph 155 of the Framework. No other exceptions are relied upon by the appellant. Therefore, it constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Landscape setting

17. Moor Top Farm is sited within an open lowland agricultural landscape on the outskirts of the settlement of Dore, and within an Area of High Landscape Value. Beyond Hathersage Road to the west is Burbage Moor, which is identified on the made Dore Neighbourhood Plan (2021) (NP) policies map as open access land within the Peak District National Park.
18. Although prominent from Whitelow Lane and Hathersage Road, Moor Top Farm appears a collection of simple, functional vernacular buildings, which have been constructed from traditional materials and to a design that is sympathetic with the local area. In contrast, rather than being 'very light weight,' the row of lampposts are an overtly grand addition, designed with fluted columns and decorative lanterns, which are not functional nor simple in appearance.
19. From a distance to the east along Whitelow Lane, the black coloured lampposts and CCTV pole are partly absorbed into the backdrop of Burbage Moor which rises to the west beyond Hathersage Road. However, in closer views, they are not absorbed into or appear subservient to this landscape feature. Rather, as described above, in the absence of any other streetlighting or lighting columns in the area, the row of prominent, domestic structures appear an incongruous and urbanising addition in an otherwise agricultural landscape.

20. On the opposite side of Hathersage Road is a footpath which climbs onto Burbage Moor, which is within the Peak District National Park. From here, despite the distance, the lighting columns along the driveway and the CCTV pole can be seen. Although the appellant has suggested measures to try and reduce the lighting effects, during hours of dusk or darkness light pollution would nevertheless be visible along the length of the driveway from this higher ground. Consequently, I find the development conflicts with paragraph 189 of the Framework which requires development within the setting of National Parks to be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts.
21. I therefore conclude that the development causes harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, having particular regards to its landscape setting. It conflicts with NP Policy DN1, Policy CS74 of the Core Strategy (2009) and saved UDP Policy GE8. Together these require development to respect landscape character, particularly in Areas of High Landscape Value where the protection and enhancement of the landscape will be the overriding consideration, and that development on land conspicuous from the Peak District National Park must protect, and wherever appropriate enhance its appearance and character.

Other considerations

22. The primary reason cited for the lampposts and CCTV pole is the amenity, security and safety of the occupiers of Moor Top Farm, and the security of the dwelling and its associated land, particularly at night-time. Whilst Moor Top Farm is in a rural location, and there is no streetlighting, the dwelling is not particularly isolated and there are other dwellings close-by on Whitelow Lane. However, I appreciate, as recognised in the consultation response from South Yorkshire Police, that crime prevention and property protection helps individuals feel safe and secure. I am also mindful that paragraphs 96 and 135 of the Framework requires that decisions should aim to achieve places which are safe and accessible, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life.
23. However, I have very little evidence before me that the number, location and type of lighting and CCTV is necessary for security reasons or are essential for the safe use of the driveway during hours of darkness. Moreover, I have no persuasive evidence that security and safety measures could not be installed which would provide the same benefits to the occupiers of Moor Top Farm, but in a manner which causes less harm. I therefore attach only moderate weight to these considerations.
24. The absence of any identified harm in respect of highways, amenity of neighbours, ecology, the environment, or heritage assets is a neutral factor weighing neither for nor against the development.
25. The appellant has referred me to examples of similar forms of development in the locality of the appeal site, and in the wider southwest fringes of Sheffield. Strawberry Lee Lane and Ringinglow Road are within a broadly comparable lowland agricultural landscape, albeit the Norfolk Arms public house to which I am referred is on the edge of a settlement. However, I do not have full details of the security cameras and lighting columns shown in the appellant's photographs, including the exact location or height of installations. Accordingly, I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same, or even comparable to the development before me.

26. Hillfoot Road has a different landscape context to the appeal site, largely enclosed by trees and hedges on either side of the road, and there are streetlights along at least some of its length. Similarly, the context of the example provided on Long Line differs from the appeal development, as the photograph shows the lighting and security camera situated very close to the dwelling behind wrought iron gates.
27. Whilst consistency in decision-making in the planning system is important, the examples given merely indicate that each case must be determined on its own merits, considering the specific circumstances and context of each case. The fact that apparently similar developments exist is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. I have considered this appeal on its own merits and concluded that it causes harm for the reasons I have given above.

Other Matters

28. I acknowledge the appellant's concern that the failure to engage with the Council at the pre-application stage had appeared to render the proposal inappropriate. However, I have no evidence of this, and in any event, it is not a matter which has a bearing on the appeal, which I have determined on its planning merits.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

29. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which also causes harm to the openness of the Green Belt. I attach substantial weight to the associated Green Belt harm. Furthermore, the development causes harm to the character and appearance of the area, the landscape setting and the setting of the Peak District National Park. I assign significant weight to this additional harm.
30. 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. Taken together, the other considerations put forward carry modest weight. It follows that the substantial weight to be given to Green Belt harm, together with the significant weight which I have given to the other harm identified, are not clearly outweighed by other considerations in this case. Therefore, the very special circumstances required to justify the development do not exist and it conflicts with the Framework.
31. 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. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR