



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by **P Barton BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/25/3368241

**Huckenden Farm, The Rock Cottage, Bolter End Lane, Wheeler End,
Buckinghamshire HP14 3ND**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Ana Knight against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/05113/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of timber wooden shed for the purposes of accommodating tools and machinery for the maintenance and upkeep of adjacent field.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A more concise description is given in the Council's Decision Notice that removes superfluous text from that set out in the application form. I have amended the description further in the banner heading above to omit the word *retrospective*, as it is not a description of development.
3. Whilst the appeal form indicates that no other appeals for this or nearby sites are yet to be decided, the appellant's submission refers to an enforcement appeal¹, which will be subject to a separate decision.
4. I saw during my site visit that the development has been carried out, which appears to accord with the plans before me. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the development has already taken place.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - whether the development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm as to amount to very special circumstances.

¹ Planning appeal Ref: APP/K0425/C/25/3368230

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt

6. The development consists of a modest timber structure located to the northern corner of an open field that slopes gently upwards from the cluster of residential properties to the south. I observed that the field appeared well maintained and a limited range of tools and machinery were stored in the shed.
7. The Framework identifies that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Framework states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
8. Development within the Green Belt is inappropriate with the exceptions of the types of development listed in paragraphs 154 and 155 of the Framework. Both parties have referred to paragraph 154(a) of the Framework, which is an exception covering buildings for agriculture and forestry. Based on the evidence before me I have no reason to disagree.
9. I understand that the field has been restored and prepared for the introduction of sheep and the structure would provide necessary shelter and storage. At the time of my visit to the site there was no livestock in the field. Reference has been made within the appellant's submissions to establishing a small-scale agricultural set-up that is a modest, family-driven use of the land and not a commercial enterprise. It is also asserted that the activity is more than hobby-scale, with plans for smallholder production and ecological stewardship. The responsibility of putting relevant information before me belongs with the relevant party. Consequently, it is not clear if the intended use is that of an agricultural trade or business, or more akin to a hobby.
10. On the basis of the evidence before me, and from my own observations on site, I am not persuaded that the structure would be used in a manner associated with an agricultural use. Thereby it would not be used solely or mainly for agricultural purposes and would not meet the exception given in paragraph 154 a) of the Framework. Moreover, the use of conditions to restrict the structure to an agricultural use, to prevent any future extensions and to ensure its removal if the use ceases has not led me away from my conclusion on this issue.
11. For these reasons, the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is, by definition, harmful in terms of the Framework. Neither does it accord with Policies CP8 and DM42 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019) (WDLP) which seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and clarifies, amongst other things, that the agriculture and forestry exception shall relate to development when it is reasonably necessary for an existing agricultural trade or business.

Openness

12. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt. In considering the concept of openness, the courts have found that it broadly has visual and spatial dimensions.

13. There would be minimal harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt due to the structure's modest size and its backdrop against a hedge that is of a greater height. Nevertheless, the increase in the quantum of built form by the introduction of the structure where there was previously none would result in harm, albeit limited, to the spatial openness of the Green Belt. Consequently, the development has a greater impact on the openness than prior to it being carried out.

Other considerations

14. The appellant contends that the scale of the structure is appropriate to a flock of 4 to 6 sheep and would provide weather protection, safe lambing conditions, and storage of feed, tools and veterinary supplies. This would support animal welfare and holds moderate weight in my assessment.
15. Improvements to biodiversity through traditional land stewardship as well as supporting a sustainable, educational and low-impact land use would represent a benefit and I afford this moderate weight.
16. It has been brought to my attention that the appeal site formed part of a historical farm and that the Framework supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, as well as the development and diversification of agricultural and other-land based rural business. Nevertheless, in light of my conclusion on the use of the structure, I attribute this limited weight.
17. Comments relating to an alleged previous use of the structure on the site have been made. Nevertheless, I have had regard solely to the planning merits of the appeal scheme before me.
18. A lack of harm or policy compliance in terms of the effect of the development on living conditions, ecology, trees and heritage assets are neutral considerations that weigh neither for nor against the development.
19. I acknowledge that the development did not generate any objections from neighbours. However, I must consider the appeal based on its merits.
20. The appeal site is within the Chilterns National Landscape (CNL). Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended) requires that regard be had to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes. There is also a duty under Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas. These purposes also include increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the National Landscapes. The Council has not raised an objection to the development's impact on the CNL and from my own observations, I see no reason to come to a different conclusion on this matter.
21. I saw that the development is sufficiently removed from the original farmhouse buildings at Huckenden Farm, which are Grade II listed buildings, and the Cadmore End Common Conservation Area. Consequently, I have come to the same conclusion as the Council on this matter and raise no concerns.

Planning Balance

22. Paragraph 153 of the Framework is clear that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. I have found that

there would be harm to the Green Belt by reason of the development's inappropriateness and its effect on openness.

23. The Framework states that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the development must be clearly outweighed by other considerations for planning permission to be granted. The other considerations in this case, as detailed above, are not sufficient to comprise the very special circumstances necessary to justify this development. This would be contrary to the Framework and WDLP Policies CP8 and DM42.

Conclusion

24. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Barton

INSPECTOR