



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/25/3374217

Cope Cottage, 6 Hortham Lane, Almondsbury, South Gloucestershire, BS32 4JH

- 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 Barrie Lyon against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref is P25/00761/HH.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of garages, outbuildings and existing ground floor rooms to be replaced by new single and upper storey extensions and new single garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The appeal site lies within the Bristol/Bath Green Belt (GB). Accordingly, the main issues are: (a) whether the development is inappropriate or not inappropriate development in the GB for the purposes of the Framework¹ and development plan policy; (b) the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings, and (c) whether other considerations clearly outweigh the harm to the GB and any other harm so as to amount to very special circumstances.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate or not inappropriate development

3. The Framework establishes that the construction of new buildings in the GB should be regarded as inappropriate unless one of the specified exceptions applies. These include 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.
4. Policy CS5 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) requires that proposals for development in the GB must comply with the provisions of the Framework. Policy PSP7 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (LP) provides more detailed policy guidance in that it sets out in empirical terms the level of volume increases to the original building likely to be considered as disproportionate or not disproportionate additions.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework

5. The term '*original building*' is used in both national and local policy. Judging from the references to the planning history by both parties, the original building, as defined in local and national policy, has been subject to previous extensions and alterations. No measurements or calculations have been provided as to the precise level of extensions previously carried out, but the appellant has not seriously disputed the Council's view that the original building has been extended substantially in the past, being closer to a 100% volume increase than the 50% set in LP policy PSP7 as the volume increase most likely to be considered as a disproportionate addition.
6. The appellant argues that the proposal cannot be a disproportionate addition to the dwelling contrary to LP policy PSP7 '*because the house has already been extended to that level*', and what exists is lawful. However, this assertion overlooks the provisions of both national and local policy which both refer to the starting point for the appropriate assessment of disproportionate additions as being the original dwelling. The extensions proposed to the dwelling as it stands are substantial, being significantly more than 200m³.
7. I consider this level of addition, having regard to the planning history, to comprise inappropriate development in the GB in terms of national policy, and as being contrary to the provisions of CS policy CS5 and LP policy PSP7. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and attracts substantial weight against the development.

Character and appearance

8. The property is a detached dwelling set in a generous garden, being sited alongside a country lane where other residential development is evident. I share the appellant's view that in terms of its overall appearance the dwelling currently presents two distinct faces. The front elevation facing the lane contains echoes of the original dwelling and its appearance is significantly different to the more modern forms of development seen to the side and rear.
9. Much of the proposed new development, largely single storey at the rear, would not be noticeable in the public realm, and the crown form adopted for part of the roof would not be read as such from the highway outside. The design of the extensions would marry appropriately with that of the rear of the dwelling, and the proposed porch which the Council finds objectionable, would not in my view cause visual offence.
10. I conclude that the development would fit acceptably into its visual context, without materially affecting the character and appearance of the host property or its surroundings. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those provisions of policies CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy (December 2013) and PSP1 & PSP38 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (November 2017) directed to promote and encourage high quality design generally, and specifically in residential extensions.

Other considerations

11. The proposals include the demolition of outbuildings, and the erection of a single garage. The appellant has calculated that the demolitions, which include small parts of the existing dwelling, when compared with the volume of new build, would almost balance each other out. The appellant considers the net additional volume

to be *de minimus*, and in his view the overall effect of the demolitions and removal of the outbuildings would be to enhance and increase openness.

12. Openness has a spatial and visual aspect, and I share the appellant's view that some benefits would arise from the removal of outbuildings, particularly those to the south of the dwelling. However, these would be offset by the substantially increased bulk and volume of the dwelling and the replacement garage. The benefits arising to the openness of this part of the GB from demolitions would in my judgment be minor.
13. The appellant also suggests that it would be open to the appellant to erect additional outbuildings in the garden as permitted development, the implication being that the garage proposed need not have been part of the scheme. However, there is no certificate of lawfulness before me to verify the appellant's point, and the scheme as it stands clearly includes the garage as part of the proposals.
14. Reference has been made to the draft deposit South Gloucestershire Local Plan which has been submitted for its Examination in Public, due to take place in 2026. Since the plan is subject to possible change it attracts little or no weight. It is of course possible that policy circumstances may change in future, but I am required to assess the proposal as matters stand now.

Planning balance and overall conclusions

15. I have found the proposal to comprise inappropriate development in the GB and this attracts substantial weight against the scheme. I have found in the appellant's favour on the effect of the development on local character and appearance, but this is a neutral factor in terms of the application of green belt policy since any residential extension is expected to be compliant with other development plan policies, particularly in respect of design. I attach little or minimal weight to the other considerations in this case particularly the effect on openness.
16. In my opinion the other considerations do not clearly outweigh the totality of the harm to the GB and, accordingly, very special circumstances do not exist.
17. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR