



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2025 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by F Harrison BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/D/25/3374199

Longacre, Wolverhampton Road, Nurton, Staffordshire WV6 7AD

- 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 T Baden against the decision of South Staffordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00481/FULHH.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey rear extension and single storey side/rear extension and alterations to create a new access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i) whether the development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies,
 - ii) the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt,
 - iii) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area; and
 - iv) if the development would be inappropriate, whether the 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 it.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether inappropriate development

4. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling located in the West Midlands Green Belt. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states that development is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets certain exceptions. One such exception, at paragraph 154(c), is for 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. The Framework defines an original building as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after this date, as it was built originally.

5. The Framework does not define the specific meaning of disproportionate in relation to the paragraph 154(c) exception. Policy GB1 of the South Staffordshire Council Core Strategy (2012) (CS) states that extensions should not be disproportionate to the size of the original building, but it too does not define the meaning of disproportionate in terms of extensions. The Green Belt and Open Countryside Supplementary Planning Document (2014) (SPD), defines disproportionate in the context of extensions as being between 20% and 40% of the original floor area of the building. It also advises that cumulative extensions beyond 40% of the original building would be disproportionate. The SPD is not part of the development plan, nevertheless, it is relevant local guidance on this matter.
6. The appeal property's original floor area was approximately 179 square meters (sqm). It has already been extended by 133% over the original floor area. With the current proposal, the floor area increase would be 160% over the original floor area. The overall scale and volume of the building would increase accordingly. I have not been provided with any alternative figures by the appellant. Given that these figures are substantially greater than that advised in the SPD, this leads me to conclude that the proposal would result in a disproportionate addition. The proposal does not therefore meet the exception at Framework paragraph 154(c), and it would be in conflict with Policy GB1 of the CS.
7. It has not been suggested that the appeal scheme meets any of the other listed exceptions at Framework paragraph 154, and I see no clear reason to take a different view. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

Openness

8. Paragraph 142 of the Framework states that 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. Openness has a spatial and a visual dimension.
9. The proposal would introduce additional bulk and mass to the appeal property, reducing the openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms. The double gable feature on the rear elevation would be largely screened behind the side elevation of the building when viewed from Wolverhampton Road. The single storey side and rear extension would also be lower in height than the existing extension, thus reducing its visual effects on openness. Whilst the extensions would be visible across the field to the rear of the site, this would generally be limited to longer range views. Overall, the proposal would result in some limited harm to openness, contrary to paragraph 142 of the Framework.

Character and appearance

10. The site is located in a rural area, characterised by traditional dwellings set amongst the countryside. The modest height of the boundary hedge along the Wolverhampton Road frontage results in the appeal property having a prominent presence when viewed along the road. It has an attractive and interesting appearance, created by its coherent and traditional design, including its recurring

pitched roof forms. The appeal property therefore contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

11. The South Staffordshire Design Guide (2018) (DG) advises that extensions should respect the scale and form of the main building. It also states that consideration should be given to the appearance of the building as a whole, and that extensions should not detract from the original building. That would not be the case with the appeal scheme. The proposed single storey side and rear extension would have a flat roof and its side elevation facing Wolverhampton Road would be entirely blank. This excessively simple design would exaggerate the length of the extension when viewed from Wolverhampton Road. Moreover, its lengthy flat roof would contrast with the pitched roof forms found elsewhere on the dwelling and would undermine its overall coherence.
12. The proposal would therefore be an incongruous addition which would significantly detract from the appearance of the original building, all the more so given its conspicuous siting and visibility from the road. In doing so it would draw the eye and detract from the prevailing harmonious character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to the DG which advises that development should be visually attractive and add to the overall quality of the area, and to the provisions of the Framework which requires high quality places.
13. Whilst they would be relatively prominent in size, the double gable feature on the rear elevation would be similar in scale and design to the gables on the side elevations of the dwelling. They would be set down from the top of the original roof, and they would be modest in terms of their footprint. Accordingly, this element of the proposal would not diminish the character and appearance of the area.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policies EQ4 and EQ11 of the CS, which amongst other matters, require that developments are of a high-quality design which respects local character and distinctiveness and contributes positively to the street scene.

Other considerations

15. I have had regard to Drawing 22-84-04B, a scheme that benefits from a Certificate of Lawful Development (LDC)¹ in relation to works that are permitted development, and this is a fallback position. As the dwelling benefits from an LDC there is a greater than theoretical possibility that, if the appeal is dismissed, the fallback scheme may be implemented. For significant weight to be afforded to the fallback position, there needs not only to be a reasonable prospect of it being carried out, but it would also need to be more harmful than the scheme for which permission is being sought.
16. The floor area increase in the fallback scheme would be numerically larger than the appeal proposal, and the cumulative extensions would be proportionately larger than the original dwelling in comparison to the appeal scheme. It therefore follows that the fallback scheme would have a greater physical presence in the Green Belt than the appeal scheme. However, in the fallback scheme, the existing single storey extension on the side elevation facing Wolverhampton Road would maintain its mostly pitched roof form and chimney, which is more complementary to the

¹ Application reference 23/00518/LUP

design of the dwelling compared to the inappropriate design of the appeal scheme. The fallback position would be more harmful to the Green Belt, but it would be less harmful to the character and appearance of the area. On this basis, I find the fallback position to have moderate weight.

17. I have also had regard to another appeal decision², however, that Inspector found the fallback scheme to be more harmful than the appeal scheme. As that is not the same scenario as my findings on this appeal, it is not directly comparable and does not lead me away from my above findings on the fallback position.
18. The proposal is sought to provide accommodation for the appellant's children as well as elderly relatives with health issues. I have carefully considered the appellant's personal circumstances, however, there is insufficient specific evidence to draw a clear conclusion that the proposal, and in particular, the configuration and use of the whole property, is the only reasonable option available to meet the family's needs, and could not be addressed through a proposal which would not have an unacceptable effect in terms of character and appearance. Consequently, based on the evidence before me, I give the appellant's personal circumstances moderate weight in this instance.
19. Age and disability are protected characteristics, as such, in coming to the above conclusion, I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in eliminating discrimination against persons with the protected characteristics, advancing equality of opportunity for those persons and fostering good relations between them and others. However, for the reasons set out above, there is limited evidence to suggest that the dismissal of the appeal would have a disproportionate effect on the personal circumstances identified by the appellant, when weighed against the planning harm.
20. The absence of harm in terms of the new access, as well as the lack of objections from the Highway Authority and the Council's Tree Officer are neutral factors which weigh neither for nor against the proposal. Similarly, even though the appellant would be prepared to accept a condition to remove permitted development rights for further extensions to the house, this does not alter the harmful effects of the appeal scheme and is a neutral matter.

Planning Balance

21. The proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area, in conflict with the development plan, to which I attach significant weight.
22. I have found that the proposal would amount to disproportionate additions to the original building such that it would be inappropriate development, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. There would be a modest reduction in openness which is also harmful to the Green Belt. The totality of the Green Belt harm attracts substantial weight. Very special circumstances will not exist unless harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

² Appeal reference APP/C3430/D/25/3368578

23. I attach moderate weight to the fallback position and moderate weight to the appellant's personal circumstances which makes up the other considerations. Therefore, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal do not exist and the proposal fails to accord with the Green Belt aims set out in Policy GB1 of the CS and the Framework.

Conclusion and Recommendation

24. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan as a whole, and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, which would outweigh this conflict. Therefore, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

25. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR