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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2025

by **L Fern BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 October 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R4408/D/25/3369722**

**Stancliffe Farm House, Woodhead Road, Wortley, Sheffield S35 7DA**

- 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 Ram Singh against the decision of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is 2025/0310.
  - The development proposed is demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of 2no. single storey, flat sedum roofed, staggered 'wing' extensions linking the existing dwelling with an existing outbuilding and creating a central courtyard area.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the proposed development in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice. It represents a clearer and more accurate description than that on the application form. I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by my use of this description.
3. The appellant's evidence provides various scenarios with regards to Building 1, including repurposing it and demolishing it, and the potential to demolish the stable block. However, the originally submitted plans clearly show the proposed retention in full of both buildings and there are no alternative plans before me to demonstrate otherwise. I must therefore base my decision on the proposal as set out on the submitted plans, which were subject to public consultation, and on which the Council determined the application.

### Main Issues

4. 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 any relevant development plan policies, and the effect of the proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider property;
  - the effect of the proposed development on ecology, with particular regard to bat roosting habitat; and

- whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

## Reasons

5. The appeal site forms part of a wider collection of buildings, and comprises outbuildings and a two-storey dwelling, which has benefitted from substantial upper and outer extensions from its original form as a bungalow. The dwelling is simple and traditional in design and includes a hipped roof design to the main part of the building. The topography of the land slopes significantly away from Woodhead Road, resulting in the orientation of the existing buildings broadly following the contours of the land.
6. The proposed development predominantly seeks the demolition of Buildings 2 and 6 to make way for two substantial flat roofed single storey winged extensions, with internal courtyard garden, connecting the existing dwelling to Building 1.

### *Whether inappropriate development, and openness*

7. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Framework further establishes that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions applies, as set out in Paragraph 154. One such exception, at Paragraph 154(c), is 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.
8. The Framework does not provide a definition of 'disproportionate additions' and therefore an assessment as such is a matter of planning judgement. The Framework is however clear in its definition of 'original building' in that it is a building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. As such, this forms the baseline.
9. Policies GB1 and GB2 of the Barnsley Local Plan, adopted January 2019 (the LP) broadly conform to the general thrust of national Green Belt policy, with Policy GB2 only permitting extensions and alterations to buildings where the total size of the proposed and previous extensions does not exceed the size of the original dwelling, using the same definition of 'original' as the Framework. Policy GB2 thus permits only a maximum doubling of the size of the original bungalow. The Council's House Extensions and Other Domestic Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (2024) (the SPD) makes similar requirements.
10. Although it is unclear when the bungalow was first constructed, the upper and outer extensions increased the existing property by approximately 150%, as calculated by the appellant, and were added around the 1980s<sup>1</sup>. It therefore follows that these extensions do not form part of the original building for the purposes of applying the exception under Paragraph 154 and calculating the limit under Policy GB2.
11. The parties dispute the exact calculation of the proposed percentage increase in floorspace of the proposal. Nevertheless, given that the property has already been extended beyond the limit imposed by Policy GB2, any further extension would

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<sup>1</sup> Council Ref B/86/1055/WO.

conflict with the policy. Furthermore, the substantial winged extensions, despite being single storey, would stretch considerably beyond the existing rear extension of the original building, connecting it to Building 1, an outbuilding a considerable distance away.

12. Given their large size and extent, and taken cumulatively with the previous development to the dwelling, the proposed extensions, despite being located on a large property overall, would not be proportionate to the original very modest bungalow, even when taking account of the proposed demolition of Buildings 2 and 6. Instead, they would result in a very substantial increase. As such, the proposal would result in disproportionate additions to the original dwelling and would not therefore benefit from the exception under Paragraph 154(c) of the Framework. Accordingly, it would constitute inappropriate development.
13. There is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that the previously approved extensions were granted under a similar policy regime as the current appeal. In any case, the development plan and the Framework now in force require me to consider the increase in size on a cumulative basis against the limits and baseline that planning policy imposes. Arguments that a replacement dwelling of similar floorspace increase may be acceptable are not relevant because this is not the proposal before me.
14. Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt that has spatial as well as visual aspects. Due to the sloping topography of the land, the appeal proposal would be well screened from view from Woodhead Road by intervening buildings. Furthermore, the proposed single storey extensions would be largely contained between existing built development on two sides and substantial conifer hedgerows on the other sides, largely shielding it from view from the surrounding more open countryside.
15. However, from a spatial perspective, the appeal proposal would significantly increase the volume, massing and footprint of the existing building and in doing so would result in a harmful loss of openness. This is particularly prevalent given that gaps currently exist between the buildings that would be evidently lost with the proposed extensions.
16. For these reasons, the appeal proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful as set out at Paragraph 153 of the Framework. It would therefore conflict with Policies GB1 and GB2 of the LP and the SPD.

#### *Character and appearance*

17. Policy GB2 of the LP requires that extensions to dwellings should not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Green Belt. The proposal has been designed in a courtyard arrangement, intended to consolidate existing outbuildings. However, despite being single storey in design, the proposed extensions would be substantial in width and length and would extend considerably beyond the current extent of the dwelling, thereby failing to be subservient to its host.
18. The proposed extensions would cut across the contours of the land for a considerable distance, which would result in a complicated multi-stepped roof

design. This would be out of keeping with the simple built form of the host property, which comprises individual buildings that follow the lay of the land.

19. The use of a flat roofed design across the large expanse of extension would appear alien against the predominantly pitched roofs across the site. The appellant has made comparisons with the new dwelling being built adjacent to the appeal site under a recent planning permission<sup>2</sup>, which is purported to include a flat roofed design. However, the new dwelling had only partially been constructed at the time of my site visit and there are no substantial details of it before me to illustrate the flat roofed design for me to be able to draw any comparison with the appeal proposal.
20. For these reasons, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider property. Thus, it would be contrary to Policy GB2 of the LP in this respect.

### *Ecology*

21. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) impose a duty on me to consider whether European Protected Species, such as bats, would be affected by the proposed development. The proposed development seeks the demolition of outbuildings. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment makes clear that an emergence survey is necessary to fully assess whether the building is used by bats.
22. It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, as set out in Paragraph 99 of Circular 06/05 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. As such, a condition requiring a survey to be submitted and approved later would be inappropriate.
23. For the above reasons, the proposed development would fail to accord with Policy BIO1 of the LP, which, amongst other things, expects development to conserve and enhance the biodiversity features of the Borough by protecting and improving habitats and species.

### *Other considerations*

24. It is understandable that the appellant wishes to provide a modern living environment, which would support multi-generational care, and the mental health and wellbeing needs of their family. The proposed development, in conjunction with other approved development on the wider property, would offer such provision, which is important to the appellant and their family for cultural reasons. I am mindful of my duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty arising from Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010.
25. Furthermore, the proposed use of green roofs and driveway surfacing, sustainable construction materials and energy efficient installations are also benefits of the proposed development.
26. However, I give the benefits identified above only limited positive weight, given that they relate to just a single property.

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<sup>2</sup> Council Ref 2023/1128.

27. The evidence refers to a potential alternative option in the form of a lengthy rear extension that could be erected under permitted development rights. However, the extent of such rights may be limited due to the scale of previous extensions, and they would not result in the same amount of development as the proposal. As such, any fallback under these rights does not overcome my concerns.
28. As the proposal would not constitute a new dwelling, it would not contribute to the Council's supply of deliverable housing sites.

### **Green Belt Balance and Conclusion**

29. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would harm its openness. As such, the Framework requires me to give this harm substantial negative weight. I have also found harm in relation to the effect on character and appearance and in relation to ecology matters, to which I give each significant negative weight.
30. For the reasons set out above, I find that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
31. For the reasons given, I have found conflict with the development plan as a whole. The material considerations in this case, and the weight I give to them, do not indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. This leads me to conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*L Fern*

INSPECTOR