



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2026

by **K Winnard LL.B Hons Solicitor**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 August 2026

Appeal Ref: 6010932

Willow House, Leek Road, Longsdon, Staffordshire ST9 9QF

- 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 and Mrs Kinsey against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2026/0043
 - The development proposed are alterations and extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the appeal are as follows:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the Framework and any relevant development plan policies;
 - If so, the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area; 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 necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Inappropriate Development

3. Willow House is a detached dwelling, which has been previously extended, located within the Green Belt. The Framework establishes that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate development within the Green Belt unless it falls within specified exceptions. Paragraph 154 includes amongst other exceptions: (c) the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Plan (LP), concerned with 'other rural areas' comprising the countryside and the Green Belt, allows for extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design. It further states in Section 6 that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined in

government policy. Policy SS9 of the LP, identifies Longsdon as a smaller village where development will be strictly controlled in order that the character and life of the settlement is not undermined.

4. The Framework defines the original building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or if constructed after that date, as it was first constructed. It does not detail what a disproportionate addition means, nor does it specify volumetric or other standards, or that comparisons are to be made with reference to the size and scale of the existing layout.
5. The proposal seeks to extend the dwelling by the construction of a single storey rear extension and the addition of a first floor side extension building over the width of the existing side projection. The appellant asserts the Council have over-estimated the increase of floor space based on an erroneous assessment of the original building. In this regard the appellant has submitted an extract from a conveyance showing the outline of the property as it existed in 1967, the date the appellant advises, when the property was built. This shows the original building include parts of the building considered by the Council to be extensions, to have been part of the building in 1967. The appellant does not however dispute that the lean to outrigger at the side of the dwelling is an extension subsequently constructed. On the above basis the appellant now estimates that the footprint of the property would, as a result of the proposed alterations, result in an increase by 39.3% of the footprint and a 45% increase in the first floor area of the original building.
6. The Council accepts that the full planning history of the property is not available but even on the calculations now put forward by the appellant such estimates are not in any event insignificant in themselves. Be that as it may, disproportionate additions are not based purely on a mathematical calculation alone. Rather, it is an objective test which could include, amongst other things, the floor area, volume, form and siting of the relevant building. It is therefore a planning judgement on the basis of the scheme and its context. In this instance the bulk and mass of Willow House would be increased substantially. At first floor level the building would nearly double in width and the rear extension would substantially increase the mass of the building at ground floor level resulting in sizeable additions to the dwelling. In my view the proposal would therefore amount to a disproportionate increase to the building when considered together with the previous addition.
7. For these reasons, the proposal would be a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, and would not constitute an exception as specified within the Framework. On the evidence before me no other exceptions would apply and the proposal would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. It would also fail to comply LP Policy SS10, details of which are given above, insofar as scale is concerned.

Openness

8. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are their openness and spatial permanence. The openness of the Green Belt has a spatial and visual aspect and is primarily characterised by a lack of buildings or development. The proposal would increase the mass and bulk of the building both at first floor level as a result of the side extension and at ground floor level through the rear extension. There

would be an overall increase in mass and height and as a result of the increase in built form the proposal would harm the openness of the Green Belt in spatial terms.

9. In visual terms, the space above the existing single storey side projection and the two storey flank of the existing dwelling allows for an open aspect which positively contributes to the openness and appearance of this part of the Green Belt. Notwithstanding the expanse of the site to the side of the dwelling, this space would be diminished by the proposal due to the clustering of built form on this elevation of the property. The single storey extension would be located at the rear of the property and would not be visible in public views.
10. Overall, therefore the proposal would result in limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt in addition to harm by reason of being inappropriate.

Character and Appearance

11. Willow House is a detached property set back from Leek Road, in a large wide plot. The single storey development to its side allows for longer views towards a treeline and woodland landscape beyond which contributes to a wider sense of openness and general verdant feel of nature to this part of Leek Road. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SMDG) provides that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. Notwithstanding the set down from the ridge line of the dwelling and construction in matching materials, due to the extent of its projection and lack of set back from the front elevation it would appear as a significant mass of built form at first floor level. As such it would have a detrimental visual impact on the immediate area.
12. There is no uniform character in terms of design to the properties located on this part of Leek Road and the appellant makes specific reference to the extent of additions to the front of a property close to the appeal site. Whilst I observed this property on my site visit, I am not aware of the full circumstances surrounding this development. Although it may have increased its size, it lies further back at an angle from Leek Road, where views of the wider landscape are less discernible. Its site context therefore differs from the appeal proposal and does not represent a direct parallel. I have considered the proposal on its own merits and the presence of other extensions in the area does not alter my conclusion regarding the particular harm to character and appearance which would arise in this matter.
13. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. As such, it would be contrary to LP Policies DC1, SS9 and SS10 which together, amongst other things, require development to respect the site and its surroundings, and to be of an appropriate scale. It would also fail to comply with guidance in the SMDG in that it would fail to harmonise with the parent building.

Other Considerations

14. The appellant asserts that the Council has misinterpreted the restrictive elements of the rural area policies in that the proposal would support the longevity of housing stock within a service village, and meet residential needs in a sustainable way. Support for these aims is to be found in Policies SS9 and SS10, both of which allow for development within service villages and rural areas which meet essential needs and housing requirements.

15. The proposal would result in enhanced living accommodation for the appellant and their family and would provide for larger accommodation within the local housing stock. However, I am not convinced that the proposal would be the only way practical option to deliver upgrades to the property. In any event, the benefits to the community brought about by the intended improvements to the local housing stock would be limited.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

16. The proposal would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt to which I attach substantial weight. It would also cause limited harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The Framework indicates that inappropriate development within the Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The other considerations indicated above do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the harm to openness and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.
17. For the reasons given above having considered the development plan and all other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Winnard

INSPECTOR