



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2025

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/D/25/3368504

3 Snowdon Cottage Snowdon Road, Beckbury, Shifnal, Shropshire WV6 7HS

- 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 Tim Harris against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01371/FUL.
 - The development proposed is side extension at first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to any relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework);
 - the effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the effect of the proposal on protected species, with specific regard to bats; and
 - on the basis that the proposal would be inappropriate development, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances required to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

3. Policy CS5 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011) (Core Strategy) permits appropriate development and infilling at certain locations within the designated Green Belt, as well as limited local needs affordable housing on exception sites. In addition to this, Policy MD6 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (SAMDev Plan) permits development on previously developed sites, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, providing it would meet certain criteria.
4. The proposed extension would not meet any of these exceptions and would therefore be at odds with these policies.

5. Notwithstanding this, while the exceptions set out in Policies CS5 of the Core Strategy and MD6 of the SAMDev Plan broadly reflect some of the exceptions set out at paragraph 154 of the Framework, the overall policy approach and totality of the exceptions is somewhat different. Also, unlike the Framework, neither policy permits inappropriate development in the Green Belt in very special circumstances. These development plan policies are therefore not consistent with the provisions of the Framework. As the Framework is more up to date than the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan, I give greater weight to the policies in the Framework in this regard and have assessed the appeal on this basis.
6. Paragraph 154 of the Framework states development in the Green Belt to be inappropriate unless one of the listed exceptions applies. The exceptions include the extension and alteration of a building, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
7. The appeal property has been previously extended. The extensions include a two-storey rear extension, single storey rear extension and single storey side extension. All these extensions are an appreciable size and, cumulatively, already significantly larger than the original building. Given this, the proposal would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. As such, it would be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

Openness

8. The proposed extension would be a moderate size and would unavoidably take up space, which is currently open, albeit this would be air space. Therefore, despite being located on top of the existing first-floor extension, the proposal would result in moderate harm to the spatial openness of the Green Belt.
9. The proposed extension would not extend beyond the height, width or depth of the host dwelling. Nonetheless, it would be an obvious addition in the street-scene, with direct views from Snowdon Lane of both its front and side elevations, meaning its overall massing would be readily apparent. This would result in some moderate and localised harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt.
10. Accordingly, the proposed extension would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt contrary to the fundamental aim of the Framework.

Protected species

11. The proposal would involve the modification of existing roof structures. Given this, a survey is required to demonstrate the presence or otherwise of bats. The appellant does not dispute the need for a survey and has indicated that one would be undertaken before any work was carried out.
12. Nevertheless, Circular 06/2005¹ advises that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted so that the effect on biodiversity is identified as a material consideration. It goes on to advise that the need to ensure that ecological surveys are carried out should only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances. I am not aware of any such circumstances in this case.

¹ Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System, dated 16 August 2005

13. Given the above, I find that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on protected species. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD12 of the SAMDev Plan, which seek to conserve and enhance Shropshire's natural assets, including biodiversity.

Other Considerations

14. The appellant's personal circumstances require him to reside in a house with three bedrooms on the same floor. The appeal property in its current layout does not provide this and the proposal seeks to address this.
15. I have before me a set of plans that supported a previous application² at the appeal site, which show the appeal property, at that time, to have three first-floor bedrooms. While the appeal property has been subsequently altered to provide only two first-floor bedrooms, there is nothing before me to demonstrate that it would not be possible to restore the previous layout, or something similar, that would provide the three first-floor bedrooms required by the appellant. Thus, there are ways to meet the appellant's personal circumstances, which would result in less harm to the Green Belt.
16. Furthermore, there is no mechanism before me to restrict the occupancy of the appeal property. As an open market dwelling any planning permission would run with the appeal property and therefore it could be occupied by others, now and in the future, who do not have the same needs as the appellant. The weight I can afford to these personal circumstances in my decision is therefore limited.

Green Belt Balance

17. Paragraph 153 of the Framework indicates that inappropriate development 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 harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
18. The proposal would be an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt and would also harm its openness. In line with Paragraph 153 of the Framework, I afford this harm substantial weight. I have also found, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the proposal would result in significant harm to bats.
19. Accordingly, the limited considerations would not clearly outweigh the harm I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal have not been demonstrated.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. It has not been demonstrated that there are any material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Hannah Guest INSPECTOR

² Application Reference: 20/00107/FUL