

Consultation Response from: Planning Policy Group		
Address: 22 Dark Lane Almondbury		
Proposal: Erection of extensions, alterations to vehicular access and demolition of out-buildings		
Date Responded: 23/9/2020	Responding Officer: Amanda Potter	Responding Ref:
This application proposes extensions and other alterations to an existing detached dwelling standing in a large plot. The site is within the green belt on the adopted Kirklees Local Plan and therefore green belt policy applies. National planning policy states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the green belt unless the development falls within one of the exceptions listed in paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Criterion c) of NPPF paragraph 145 states that one of the exceptions is the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF states that certain other forms of development need not be inappropriate subject to consideration of openness and the purposes of including land in the green belt. The engineering operations proposed to create terracing to form driveways, level platforms for car parking, retaining structures and steps, must be judged on their impact on openness and on the purposes of including land in the green belt. The existing dwelling is large and stands in large grounds, the whole already having an entirely domestic character. As such the building and the plot could accommodate sizeable extension and other alterations without being disproportionate. Local Plan policy LP57 supports NPPF paragraph 145 criteria c) and states that proposals will normally be acceptable provided that the original building remains the dominant element both in terms of size and overall appearance. The proposal should also not result in a greater impact on openness in terms of treatment of outdoor areas including hard standings, curtilages, enclosures and means of access. In this case it is accepted that the building that exists today most probably existed on 1st July 1948 so it can be said to be original for the purposes of green belt policy, albeit the building consists of two distinct elements, the traditionally constructed double fronted stone cottage and the later 'half timbered' addition, which are distinct both in character and appearance. There are also ancillary outbuildings, hardstanding and retaining structures within the grounds as well as two existing accesses to Dark Lane. The judgement to be made therefore is whether the extensions and alterations proposed along with the other works to the grounds are to such a scale that the scheme fails to comply with LP57. LP57 is clear that the original building should remain the dominant element both in terms of size and overall appearance. This application proposes major extension and/or alteration to every elevation of the existing building. This includes a new main entrance porch and attached two storey and single storey element forming the cinema, bedrooms and garage as well as another new two storey element to the north elevation; orangery to the west elevation; expanding the cottage to create a glass fronted kitchen/dining area; whole new two storey 'diagonal' wing off that elevation with associated extensive terracing, and incorporating within the main structure of the building the existing ancillary timber and other outbuildings to create plant room and other space on the east elevation. The proposals would dominate the original building in terms of scale, character and overall appearance. On the south elevation the original cottage would effectively disappear. The extension and alteration of this building is therefore considered contrary to LP57 and constitutes inappropriate development in the green belt. In support of the application the applicant has stated that the scheme is not a typical 'extension of a building in the green belt' as the host building and the plot within which it sits is larger than many buildings in the area. How the host building compares in size to others in the vicinity is immaterial to		

the consideration of the application which must be judged on its own merits. In addition, the presence of buildings has a spatial as well as a visual impact so the fact that a building may not be readily visible is not the primary consideration when assessing impact on openness. Outbuildings which are ancillary and subservient within a garden are not in this instance considered to constitute sprawl as this is a contained residential curtilage therefore their removal will not reduce sprawl. What will impact however is the incorporation of their volumes into extensions which obscure the original building. It is acknowledged that this is a large building in a large plot and as such a large extension may not be disproportionate simply in terms of volume. However, the application also needs to comply with LP57 which is clear that the original building should remain dominant.

In terms of impact on openness or harm caused to the purposes of including land in the green belt considered under paragraph 146 of the NPPF, the retaining structures and other works to create hardstanding may be expected within an established residential curtilage of this size and character with landscaped grounds. There would be no encroachment into the countryside as this plot is already in residential use and is largely screened from the road. It has clear screened boundaries so there would be no resulting sprawl.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight must be given to any harm and very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In this case the consideration is whether the resulting scheme has sufficient benefit to outweigh the harm to the green belt caused by inappropriate development. There is no doubt that the proposal creates a grand dwelling and that the half-timbered style has been incorporated throughout which gives the whole a coherent look. However, good design would be expected for any scheme so there is nothing very special about the proposal that would be considered to outweigh the harm to the green belt caused by inappropriateness and as such this application is not supported.

Amended plans November 2020

Revised plans have been submitted which reduce the overall volume of the proposed extensions. However, volume is not by itself an indicator of whether a scheme may be acceptable in terms of green belt policy. It is acknowledged that as this is a large house in large grounds then a large extension may not be disproportionate in terms of NPPF paragraph 145 criterion c). However, as indicated to the agent, a proposal must also have regard to Local Plan policy LP57 which states at criterion a) that in the case of extensions the original building should remain the dominant element both in terms of size and overall appearance. Reducing the size of each individual element of the scheme does not overcome the fundamental issue that extensions and alterations are proposed to every elevation of this building, along with substantial engineering works to the grounds, which when taken together would dominate the original building in terms of scale, character and overall appearance, contrary to LP57. The scheme as proposed is also considered contrary to Local Plan policy LP24 'Design' criterion c) which states that extensions should be subservient to the original building and in keeping in terms of scale.

There is nothing in the amended plans therefore that would alter the position that the proposal is considered to constitute inappropriate development in the green belt.