

Planning Statement

2 Castlemans Farm Cottages

18.05.2026

Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a householder application for the erection of a single-storey rear extension, alongside a partial garage conversion to create habitable accommodation, and associated changes to fenestration.

The applicant proactively sought pre-application advice for this project (Local Authority Ref: 260155) and welcomes the constructive response provided by the case officer. Whilst further architectural refinements have been made to build upon the officer's helpful comments, the proposal submitted for full planning permission herein remains fundamentally consistent in its arrangement, volume and proportions with the pre-application design. As such, it is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority's previous positive assessment regarding the development's general scale, form, and relationship to the surrounding context remains applicable to this scheme.

Area



The house lies on the east side of Bath Road (A4) within a primarily built up area, but is not within any defined settlement boundary and is therefore considered for planning purposes to be in the countryside. The house is not within a conservation area.

As can be seen in the aerial image above, the area is characterised predominantly by residential properties, but there are also commercial uses in the area, including a 24-hour petrol station, car dealership and public house on the west side of the A4 opposite the site, and a gym and cattery to the south of the site on the east side of the road. The

open land to the east of the site is Castle Royle Golf Club.

House

The original Victorian property was one of a semi-detached pair of farmworkers cottages to Castlemans Farm (now Castle Royal Golf Club). It is not listed, and has subsequently been extended twice: firstly by a single-storey garage to the side (19350), and secondly by a single-storey kitchen extension to the rear (completed under permitted development). The property has also had an application approved (but never constructed and now lapsed) to form a two storey extension consisting of a garage with bedroom at first floor (11149).



As seen in the image above, which shows the rear elevation of the house as it currently stands, the piecemeal and relatively low-quality nature of the property's two extensions has created a cluttered appearance from the rear aspect, with the character of the original property being spoiled by fragmented tie-ins to the back and side. It is the intent of the applicant (an architect himself) for the proposed extension to have a harmonising effect on the property. By replacing the existing kitchen extension, and wrapping to the

rear of the garage extension, a simpler rear aspect will be created with better delineation between original and new fabric, which will be of a more sympathetic and higher-quality design. An indicative sketch to illustrate the aesthetic intent of the proposal is below:



Countryside and Greenbelt

Given its location in the designated Green Belt, and outside of settlement limits in the open Countryside, it is understood that the application is to be considered under Policy CP11 & CP12 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Countryside (CP11)

Policy CP11 of the adopted Core Strategy states that development outside defined settlement boundaries will be strictly controlled, but some forms of development can

be accommodated without detriment provided that their type, form and design are sensitive to the location. The applicant is in agreement with the case officer's pre-application assessment that *"The development will appear proportionate to the size of the site. Due to the modest design and size of the proposal and as the property, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable harmful impact or does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building"*. And is pleased that *"The proposal is therefore considered compliant with policy CP11 in this respect"*.

Green Belt (CP12)

Policy CP12 of the Core Policy Strategy states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Paragraph 142 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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"*. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, the one most relevant to this proposal is, *"(c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment"*. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that, *"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. 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 potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations"*. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies: *"(c) 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"*. This is reflected in Core Strategy policies CP11 and CP12 and MDD Local Plan policy TB01, with policy CP11 stating that residential extensions will normally only be permitted where it does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Policy TB01 defines a *"limited"* increase in scale to an existing dwelling as a cumulative increase of generally no more than 35% in volume over

and above the size of the original dwelling. The NPPF clarifies that the original building is considered as it existed on 1st July 1948 when the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 came into effect, or if constructed after this date, as it was built originally. As such we consider the original building to not include either of the two current extensions.

Having now undertaken the requested volume calculations (please see drawing 108_Volume Calculations), the applicant can confirm that the proposal would increase the original building volume (not including the outbuilding) by 45% (the existing two extensions have increased the original building volume by 21%) therefore exceeding the guidance figure of a 35% increase in volume over the original dwelling as set out in Policy TB01. However, Policy TB01 only requires that extensions or alterations to dwellings in the Green Belt “*shall be limited in scale*” with reference to the 35% increase in volume coming within the text supporting that policy. Furthermore, it is a material consideration that the host dwelling is a Victorian semi-detached cottage with a particularly small original volume. In such circumstances, applying a strict arithmetical percentage limit often disproportionately restricts the ability to achieve modern living standards, as even the most modest, subservient additions quickly exceed a 35% threshold. This further emphasises the necessity of relying on the case officer's qualitative assessment - which found the physical scale and form to be proportionate - rather than a rigid mathematical calculation.

Relevant Precedent

Given the small volume of the existing dwellings in the area, several extensions above the 35% threshold exist to other houses in the nearby vicinity. The neighbouring property (1 Castlemans Farm Cottages) was originally an identical mirror of the application property, but has subsequently been extended more significantly, with single storey extensions to the side and rear, as well as a two storey extension to the side, currently sitting at approximately 68% increase. It is understood that these additions took place prior to the introduction of the 35% guidance.

Further, the applicant would like to draw the case officer's attention to a relevant local appeal decision (Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/16/3145284) which was allowed by the Planning Inspectorate. As a material consideration, we believe this decision should be

afforded substantial weight: firstly, in establishing the need to move from strictly arithmetical to qualitative assessments of Green Belt appropriateness ; and secondly, due to the direct spatial and visual similarities between that appeal site and the current proposal.

The Inspector considered an appeal for a two-storey rear extension at 'Fredericks', a property located only 100m to the north of the application site. In that case, the Inspector assessed whether the scheme (which represented a 54% volume increase over the host dwelling) constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and evaluated the effects of the proposal on openness. The Inspector observed that *"the 35% volume increase limit within the MDD is merely a guide and not an absolute,"* confirming that assessing a *"disproportionate addition"* requires a visual and spatial assessment of openness, rather than a purely arithmetical one. Having established this visual and spatial assessment is appropriate, the Inspector outlined a series of parameters for determining when an extension exceeding the 35% guide is considered appropriate. The applicant believes that the application site shares a great deal of similarity with the 'Fredericks' site, with both properties sitting within the same residential ribbon development, fronting the A4 and backing onto the same open countryside. As such, the applicant believes that many of the Inspector's qualitative assessments regarding appropriateness and openness apply directly to the application site. Ultimately, *"the effect on openness would not be so significant that it would cause any material harm to the Green Belt"*.

In allowing the appeal at Fredericks, the Inspector concluded that, *"Due to its scale, siting, and extremely limited effects on openness the appeal scheme would not constitute inappropriate development"*. Having visited the application site during the pre-application process, the case officer formed a similarly positive qualitative opinion of the current proposal. The officer helpfully observed that due to its *"discreet rear siting and sympathetic design, the extension would not appear intrusive or visually prominent in countryside views, and would therefore preserve the openness, rural character, and visual amenity of the surrounding Green Belt"*. Because the proposed single-storey extension is of a sensitive scale, is contained within the domestic curtilage, and does not encroach into the wider countryside, it preserves the openness of the Green Belt.

Consequently, as the proposal would not be of a disproportionate scale in relation to its host building, it would not therefore be inappropriate development for the purposes of the Framework and the MDD. The applicant respectfully submits that by combining the Inspectorate's established precedent - which prioritises a qualitative spatial assessment over strict mathematical volume limits - with the case officer's own site-specific evaluation, the Local Planning Authority has a robust legal framework to conclude that this modest, single-storey design preserves Green Belt openness and constitutes appropriate development.

Character, Design, and Subservience

The proposed extension has been designed to be subservient to the host dwelling. A single-storey rear extension which harmonises the two prior extensions, tying in below the first floor's feature hanging tiles. As noted by the Inspector in the aforementioned appeal, compliance with Core Strategy Policy CP11 is indicative that the scale and design of an extension is sensitive and subservient to the host dwelling. The overarching goal of this application has been to deliver a high-quality, sensitive addition that respects the host dwelling. We are greatly encouraged that this approach was recognised during the pre-application process, where the officer noted the extension *"has been sensitively designed to remain subservient to the host dwelling in both scale and appearance, ensuring it does not dominate the original form"*. By keeping the extension strictly to a single storey, we have ensured it *remains "proportionate to the host property and consistent with typical residential extensions in the surrounding area,"* as identified in the pre-application advice.

Containment within the Domestic Curtilage

The proposal is contained entirely within the existing grounds of the dwelling, which already possess a strongly domestic character. Intervening buildings, tree cover, and the topography of the land would screen the development in wider views.

Prevention of Encroachment

A fundamental purpose of the Green Belt is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The existing house is set closer to the A4 than many other properties along the east side of the road with other houses and their associated outbuildings set further back on their plots and closer to the open land to the east. Furthermore, the proposal would not increase the maximum extent of the current building footprint either towards the countryside or to the north along the road. The applicant agrees with the case officer's assessment that as the *extension "would be located to the rear it wouldn't be visible from public location, and the site has sufficient garden space to accommodate for such sized extension. Hence, the proposal would not have any adverse impact on the character of the host property or surrounding area"*. The proposed extension would be separated from the rear boundary of the plot by a generous distance, ensuring it does not encroach into the wider open surroundings of the countryside. Adjacent buildings impinge deeper into the open surroundings than the proposed extension would.

The Fallback Position

In assessing whether a development is disproportionate within the Green Belt, significant material weight must be given to what could be constructed under Permitted Development (PD) rights (the 'fallback position'). It is noted that a previous planning approval (Ref: 11149) included a condition removing the property's PD rights. However, as that permission was never implemented and has since lapsed, those conditions never took effect. The applicant's Permitted Development rights therefore remain intact. Drawing "251_Volume Calculations" illustrates the permitted development schemes the applicant could lawfully undertake (subject to Prior Approval). As demonstrated on the drawing 108_Volume Calculations, the PD fallback options would result further exacerbating the piecemeal arrangement, creating significantly more visual clutter than the cohesive design proposed herein. Crucially, the PD schemes generate an overall volume of 489m³, a 42% increase – broadly similar to the current planning application. In spatial and visual terms, the fallback schemes would have a demonstrably greater

negative impact on the openness of the countryside, the character of the site, and the subservience to the original property. While the permitted development schemes would compromise the applicant's ideal internal space requirements, the applicant has made a significant financial and emotional investment in restoring the original property and is highly reluctant to move as a consequence of his growing family. Consequently, there is a real and genuine prospect that the applicant will construct the PD scheme should this application be refused, establishing it as a legitimate, material fallback position that must be weighed in the planning balance. Finally, the applicant recognises that further ad-hoc extensions would fail to harmonise with the property. As such, the applicant would willingly accept a planning condition removing future permitted development rights for extensions, should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve this application.

Partial Garage Conversion

The proposed scheme includes the partial conversion of the existing garage to form a domestic utility room. Condition 3 of permission 19350 states *"the garage permitted shall be used as a domestic garage only and it shall not be used for business purposes for any other purpose without the prior written permission of the District Planning Authority"*. This application serves as the formal request for the required written permission to alter this use. As noted by the case officer during pre-application: *"The garage conversion would involve part of the garage being used as a utility room. A new side access door would be added; such is a minor addition and not result in harm. The garage door would remain so no external change to the front elevation, thus no harm"*.

In practical terms, while the existing garage could theoretically house a vehicle, its internal length of 5.3 metres falls short of the modern standard typically required to function as a formal parking space. At this length, it cannot comfortably accommodate a modern family vehicle while simultaneously providing the necessary domestic storage space for bicycles and refuse bins. Consequently, it has never been utilised for parking by the applicant and currently functions purely as a domestic workshop. The proposed conversion is internal and only partial. The original front garage door will be fully retained, ensuring no external changes to the front elevation. The retained front section of the garage will be utilised for the storage of items such as bicycles. This ensures such

domestic items remain hidden from the public realm, preserving the visual amenity of the street scene and maintaining the original character of the dwelling.

With regard to highway safety and parking provision, it is acknowledged that the property fronts a busy road. However, the existing driveway is generously proportioned and comfortably accommodates the household's two vehicles, ensuring no parking capacity is lost by this proposal. Most importantly for highway safety, the driveway provides ample turning space within the site boundaries. This allows two vehicles to be parked simultaneously while retaining the ability to manoeuvre, ensuring that vehicles can always enter the site, turn, and exit onto the main road in a forward gear. As the proposal results in no external alterations to the principal elevation, results in no loss of functional off-street parking, and fully maintains safe access and egress arrangements, the partial conversion will have no detrimental impact on the local highway network or the character of the street scene.

Bat Survey

The bat survey has been undertaken (please find attached document R3159_PRA_a), which concludes that the proposals are highly unlikely to result in the death, injury or disturbance of bats; the damage or destruction of a bat roost; or the obstruction of access to a bat roost, and therefore a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation license would not be required.